[Barker, Henry]

THE *Polite Gentleman*; OR, REFLECTIONS Upon the ſeveral Kinds of WIT, *VIZ.* In Converſation, Books, and Affairs of the World.

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TO

The Right Honourable

CHARLES

Earl of Dorset, *and* Middlesex, *Knight of the most Noble Order of the* Garter, *and one of His* Majesty's *Most Honourable* Privy Council.

My Lord,

TO whom cou'd a Treatise of Wit more justly fly for Protection, than to your Lordship, who are so undoubted a Master, and so generous a Patron of it? The

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Muſes have long acknowledged You their Soveraign, and indeed your Lordſhip deſerves this Eminent Title much better than the *Richelieu*'s, and *Colbert*'s either of this or former Ages, ſince you have not only encouraged them to write by your Munificence, but by your Example, which is always more efficacious. But tho', my Lord, this were Glory enough for any other Perſon but your Lordſhip, yet Wit is not the only ſhining Quality for which the World admires You: To a happy Imagination, and lively Genius You have reconciled the ſeverity and profoundneſs of Judgment: And for ought I know are the only, but I am ſure the beſt refutation of what the Author, I now with all ſubmiſſion offer to You, has advanced, *viz.* that Wit and Judgment are incompatible Talents, that never meet in the ſame Perſon. The whole Nation, my Lord, has no leſs owned the Stateſman than admired the Courtier in You, and our Iſland, of whoſe Go-

Government You had a Share in our Monarch's abſence, ow'd its Repoſe and Peace to your wiſe Adminiſtration as well as it does its Politeneſs to Your Vivacity and Wit.

Tho' this, my Lord, I hope may be ſufficient excuſe for the boldneſs of this Addreſs, yet I was farther encouraged to make You this public acknowledgement when I conſidered in what an obliging manner Your Lordſhip received me ſome Years ago in *Paris*, where You were pleaſed to lay Your Commands upon me to wait upon You when I returned to *England*. Being conſcious to my ſelf that I had nothing of my own growth that was fit to entertain Your Lordſhip, I have preſumed to lay the following Tranſlation in all humility at Your Feet, which originally comes from a Polite Kingdom, where You won the applauſe of all that had the happineſs of knowing You. But I am ſenſible

that I have too much treſpaſs'd upon Your Lordſhips Modeſty and Patience, and therefore beg leave to ſubſcribe my ſelf,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhips

moſt Humble,

moſt Obedient,

and moſt Devoted Servant.

Hen. Barker.

PRE-

PREFACE
OF THE
TRANSLATOR.

THE following Diſcourſe gave me ſo much pleaſure and ſatisfaction in the Reading, that to impreſs it the better in my Memory, as likewiſe to employ a few vacant hours I reſolved to tranſlate it, and when that was over, I was eaſily prevail'd upon to make it public. The Author of it ſeems all along to be a Man of Admirable Senſe and Penetration, who had convers'd long in the World and made nice Obſervations upon what he had ſeen. His Language is pure and eaſie but not ſwelling or affected, the common defect of moſt Writers, who have written about Wit, and diſgraced it by their Performance. He contents himſelf to expreſs his Meaning in a familiar plain Style, without an affected pomp and parade of Words which

generally ſpeaking ſerve not ſo much to inſtruct, as to amuſe or elſe to impoſe upon the Reader. Thus he talks and argues like a Philoſopher and a Man of Buſineſs, not like a flaſhy Orator who rather endeavours to adorn than to explain his Argument, and is more ſollicitous about the harmony of his Periods and the elegance of his Diction than either the cloſeneſs or juſtneſs of his Reaſoning. I muſt own indeed that our Author's Philoſophical Speculations are ſometimes too nice, and perhaps will not be found true upon a ſtrict examination; for which reaſon a Learned Gentleman to whom I communicated this Manuſcript before it was handed to the Preſs, wou'd have perſuaded me to have omitted all that relates to the Philoſophy: but I conſidered that this cou'd not be done without a manifeſt injury to my Author, whom I had not honeſtly tranſlated, if I had either left out or diſguiſed his Sentiments. Beſides I had not dealt fairly with the Reader, who perhaps may approve his Notions, or if he does not, may be glad to ſee what a Learned Man's Opinion is upon ſuch difficult Points. As this Age has cultivated Philoſophy with more application and ſucceſs than any of the preceding ones, ſo we find it has likewiſe produced a greater variety of Hypotheſes; *moſt of which made a great figure in the World and found abundance of*

Ad-

Admirers when they first appeared, but are now laid aside, and condemned as vain and precarious, and few of them keep up their first Reputation and Credit. The famous Gassend *and Monsieur* des Cartes, (*not to mention Mr.* Hobbs, *Dr.* Willis *and several of our own Countrymen*) *were they now alive wou'd have the mortification to see their different Schemes either neglected or exploded, which in their time seem'd to meet with universal approbation. If therefore our Author when he comes to account for the several sorts of Wit in a Philosophical manner, has a little overshot himself, he has done no more than abundance of celebrated* Virtuoso's *before him: And if upon so nice a subject as the Oeconomy of the Humane Structure, the motion and effects of the Animal Spirits, and the mutual influence of the Body upon the Soul and the Soul upon the Body (which after so many fruitless endeavours has not been yet satisfactorily explain'd) he has faln into some mistakes, they ought to be pardoned in him, since the best things we are able to offer upon this head, amount to no more than bare Conjectures.*

This is what I thought necessary to say in my Authors behalf, as to his Philosophy, which is the least part in him, all the rest of his Book being plain and obvious, and carrying it's own Conviction along with it. As for the

Tranſlation, I can aſſure the Reader beforehand, that it is faithful and conformable to the Original which I always kept in my ſight; judging it a leſs defect to be not ſo very ſcrupulous about my Language which after all is only the exteriour Garb, than to depart from my Author's genuine meaning, which is the Life and Spirit of every Performance.

A LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR TO HIS FRIEND.

I Perceive by your Letter, Sir, that you would have me conſent to the Publiſhing the ſmall Manuſcript I left the other day in your hands. Have you well conſidered the Propoſal you made me? and would you willingly expoſe a Friend to the Cenſure of the Publick, without pre-engaging it in ſome manner in his Favour? This ſmall Treatiſe (the preſent Subject of our Diſpute) will ſooner bring thoſe terrible

rible Gentlemen the Criticks upon me, than engage the Reader in my Favour.

My Diſcourſe is on *Wit:* A topping Subject I muſt confeſs, and ſuch as may excite the Curioſity of moſt Readers. It makes Noiſe enough in the World, and there are few but delight to hear it diſcours'd of; but when they find how I have handled this Argument, they'll immediately cry, What does this Author mean? He neither argues like a Man of Breeding, nor a *Wit*, but like a moroſe Philoſopher. Inſtead of affecting a delicate fine Stile, he uſes nothing but down right Reaſon; inſtead of Sparkling Expreſſions, and telling us pretty and agreeable Things on the Subject of *Wit*, he only ſeriouſly examines its Character. This looks like a very inſipid Piece. This, Siris what thoſe we call *Wits* will immediately ſay, and perhaps many others. But what will they not ſay, when having read ſome part of my Book, as the Table for Inſtance, they find me engag'd, and are convinc'd that I declare openly againſt them? If at the firſt glance of this Work they began to diſtruſt it, they will then abſolutely condemn it.

Thoſe Gentlemen are very humourſom, the Hand that touches them muſt be very light, and paſs extream nicely not to make them

them wince. One is always in danger of provoking them, who in the leaſt ventures to diſcourſe freely of their pretended Qualities. 'Tis the ſame with the *Wits*, as with ſome Women dreſt in all their Finery, who cannot ſuffer the leaſt Breath of Wind, for fear of diſordering their Apparel.

What need you trouble your ſelf? you will anſwer immediately. What does it ſignifie if the *Wits* do find fault with your Writings, provided you pleaſe the Men of Senſe and Judgment? I muſt confeſs, could I flatter my ſelf with that Honour, I ſhould not be ſo ſcrupulous, nor concern'd if the Men of Sence were the ſmaller Number. But I ſee this Inconvenience, that if my Book ſhould have the good Fortune not to be diſlik'd by them, it woudl however diſoblige ſome, while it pleaſed others, and I do not deſire to have any Difference with the *Wits*.

Beſides in a Subject which ought only to be manag'd for the Diverſion of thoſe who love to read, and who read only to paſs away the Time, I have taken quite another Method. I have not only retrench'd thoſe vain Diſcourſes which ſerve more to ſwell a Book, than to inſtruct the Mind; but I have alſo baniſh'd all the ſparkling Deſcriptions of a lively Imagination, which pre-

pre-engages the Readers, and Flatters their Inclinations. Will they not take it amiſs of me? Conſider this Reaſon, Sir, and after you have done ſo, do what you pleaſe. Let it moulder in your Study, or try its Fortune in the World. If you reſolve upon the latter, I have two Things to deſire of you. The firſt, that you will excuſe me for not complimenting the Courteous Reader at the Head of my Book, for this Reaſon, that I have no Complement to make him. The ſecond, that you do not put my Name in the Fronteſpiece, to have it afterwards inſerted into the Advertiſements among ſtray'd Horſes and ſtolen Spaniels in the Gazette. *Adieu.*

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OF

OF WIT.

THE real Perfection in all Things ought only to be eſteem'd, and the preference we give the one before the other, ought to proceed from its being more excellent, after we have deliberately weigh'd and compar'd them. This Truth is Univerſally receiv'd, and allow'd of when-ever propos'd; but I know not how it comes about that we are ſo ſtrongly convinc'd of this Principle, and yet make ſo ill an uſe of it.

We neither love nor eſteem Things but as they can contribute to our Happineſs, or ſerve our Intereſt; and, becauſe for the moſt part we judge of them with precipitation, before we have inquir'd into their Nature and Worth, it happens that we call that Perfect and Excellent, which is

neither the one nor the other; and Condemn that as Evil which perhaps we ſhould have found to be Good, if we had more nicely conſider'd it.

We generally place Perfection in a certain *Medium*, the Extreams of which are known to be Vicious. 'Tis agreed we cannot wander from this *Medium*, without running into Exceſs, or falling into ſome Defect; and yet we always launch into the Extreams, and blunder from the one to the other without intermiſſion, nay, without touching at this *Medium*.

Be it Error, or down-right Ignorance, that keeps us off from this point of Perfection, which makes the value and price of Things, there is nothing wherein we are more ſubject to deceive our ſelves than in the Judgment we make of the Qualities and Nature of Wit. Thoſe overſtrain'd Expreſſions we make uſe of when we diſcourſe of it, plainly prove that we are at a Nonplus when we come to judge of the Perfection of a Thing we make ſo very common, though rare and very little known. Thoſe lofty noiſy Terms of *admirable*, *excellent*, *fine Wit*, have a double meaning; and only raiſe confus'd and falſe Ideas; and we ſhould be more confounded than we imagine, were we oblig'd to give a Reaſon why

why we find an infinite deal of Wit in ſome, very little in others, whilſt we are moſt commonly content with our own.

Now ſince we are to regulate our eſteem of Things by the Idea of the Perfection we diſcover in them, if this Idea be falſe, the Eſteem which is built upon it cannot but be ill grounded.

Such for inſtance may be the eſteem we commonly have for that Quality call'd *Wit*, if, notwithſtanding its being ſo much extoll'd and courted as it is in the World, 'tis no leſs Vicious, and is as far remote from a juſt *Medium*, as what we call *Stupidity*; which is ſo much beneath it, and is indeed its very oppoſite.

The Queſtion is as important, as curious; therefore I thought my ſelf oblig'd to make ſome Reflections upon that which is call'd *Wit*, and that we call *Stupidity*, to ſee if the eſteem the World has of that, is better grounded than its ſcorn of this; and if there be any Reaſon ſo much to applaud the one, and deſpiſe the other, as is now the Faſhion of the World.

Men's ordinary Converſation, the Books they compoſe, and their Affairs in the World, are the beſt Tryals of *Wit* and *Stupidity*. We can only diſcover Men by

what they ſay, write, or do. Let us now examine wherein they beſt ſhew themſelves.

Of WIT *in* Converſation.

I.

THE Neceſſities of Life are not the ſole Reaſons of Men's Converſing with one another. As they have many other Wants for which they cannot provide by themſelves, they are oblig'd to diſcover them to each other, in hopes of Aſſiſtance which the Natural Friendſhip between them ſeems to promiſe; and which, they do not refuſe each other; becauſe it is reciprocal. 'Tis not enough to live, if we don't live happy and content. So that beſides the Neceſſaries of Life, we muſt likewiſe have thoſe things which may ſerve to make it happy. The Pleaſure of Converſation being that which chiefly contributes to this Happineſs, it is not to be wondred at if we deſire and ſearch

ſearch after it with ſo much eagerneſs, and that we ſet it off, and ſeaſon it with all that can make it moſt agreeable. Let us examine as near as we can, after what manner this is perform'd, and wherein theſe Agreements conſiſt.

II.

We communicate our Sentiments to others by Words and Expreſſions, which ſtir up in the Hearers other Notions relating to the firſt. Theſe ſecond Thoughts being follow'd with proper Expreſſions, reciprocally excite new Notions in the Mind of the firſt that ſpoke; and thoſe in an Inſtant enter into the Mind of others, to produce the ſame effect. 'Tis by this means that our Minds entertain among themſelves a ſort of Union very uſeful to Society for which Men were Born.

But as if Words and Expreſſions were not ſufficient, or as if they were but equivocal, and Signs that gave not full aſſurance of our Mind and Heart, they are accompany'd with a certain Air plainly ſhewing it ſelf on the Speaker's Countenance, and coming as it were, to ſtrengthen what he ſays, by the Impreſſion it makes upon the Hearers;

whom it perſuades ſo much the better, becauſe it is ſtronger, and the Action more lively.

I ſay, as if Expreſſions did not ſuffice; for it is certain, that the Air that artificially ſpreads it ſelf over our Countenance, after the movement of our Heart, and advances of our Mind, is a kind of mute Language, which makes People have leſs reaſon to ſuſpect our Words, becauſe it cannot ſo eaſily belye and diſguiſe it ſelf.

III.

'Tis this Commerce of Thoughts and Actions, which makes us ſo much delight in Converſation, and ſo curious in the choice of thoſe Perſons whoſe Notions ſeem to us the fineſt, whoſe Sentiments moſt lively, and Actions moſt agreeable. Whoſe Company is more acceptable than that of thoſe, who, by their Coldneſs, are incapable of ſtirring us up as much as is neceſſary to defend us from that heavineſs which ſeizes and oppreſſes us, when we are for ſome time without Action.

In effect, what is more diſmal than a Man alone abandon'd to himſelf, who thinks of nothing, or who believes he thinks

thinks of nothing, becauſe he has none but rambling unfixt Thoughts; or if you will, who being reſolv'd to fix his Thoughts upon ſome Subject, is at the ſame time taken up with empty and profound Notions which only ſerve to diſtract and trouble him, when perhaps his heated Fancy deludes him, and makes him believe they enlighten him much above others.

What an Emptineſs muſt there be in the Heart of this Man, who is incapable of all agreeable Sentiments, and of all exterior Impreſſion; and who being left to his own raving Fancies, muſt of neceſſity be at laſt diſguſted by too great a Calm, which, leaving him without Motion, leaves him alſo without Pleaſure.

Society brings us out of this Melancholy State; Company revives, and Converſation animates us. Men joining from all parts, to do that together which they could not aſunder, produce a thouſand Things which wholly owe their being but to the Diſpoſitions we reciprocally communicate to each other, and which would never have appear'd, had we not rous'd them up from that Depth in which they lay as it were buried.

IV.

The Heart finds not leſs advantage than the Mind, in diſcovering both what it is, and what it loves, its Condition and Inclination. For Converſation creates thoſe agreeable Ties which bind us one to the other, and are ſo much the more happy and durable, as the Conformity of the Humour and Paſſion whence they proceed, is the more intire and perfect. We alſo often receive from thoſe we Converſe with ſuch Marks of Honour and Eſteem, as by our Condition, and much more our particular Merit, we may lawfully pretend to, and which we freely beſtow the one on the other, either out of Decency or Duty.

Now if we change our Diſcourſe from ſerious to more free and agreeable Matters; who does not know the charming Pleaſures that we taſt; of which one of the moſt exquiſite is to have been able to give Satisfaction to others, and to have the happineſs to pleaſe; which occaſions that we never break off our Converſation better ſatisfied, than when we may flatter our ſelves in ſome meaſure that others are ſo with us.

V. What

V.

What I have ſaid is one Branch of the Advantages Men receive from the Uſe of Words and Converſation. Let us examine how they make uſe of theſe Advantages.

There are Men in the World who ſcarcely reap any Benefit by them, becauſe they have no Knowledge nor Senſe of them. There are others who make an ill uſe of them, becauſe they are too ſenſible. We ſee ſometimes Men who are ſo Cold and Melancholy, that one would think them to be without Senſe and Thought, as well as without Words; difficult to be mov'd, they neither pleaſe, nor endeavour to pleaſe; will neither know, nor be known. Company is more troubleſom to them, than the moſt diſmal Solitude; Men without any Relish or Senſe of what we call Eſteem, Honour, Union, Friendſhip, Correſpondence, agreeable Converſation; and whom I ſhould think the unhappieſt of all Men, if in this their Unhappineſs they were not ſo fortunate as to be inſenſible of it.

VI.

If ſome have no Senſe, nor Reliſh of thoſe Things, there are an infinite Number of others who are too fond of them.

What cannot the Pleaſure of being ſeen, reſpected and diſtinguiſh'd, by any Quality whatſoever, but more particularly by their *Wit* in Converſation, work on the Minds of ſome Men; where their Pride is flatter'd by the marks of Eſteem they for the moſt part receive from their Admirers! How ſtrangely muſt a great many others be affected by thoſe Pleaſures, and agreeable Thoughts and Conceptions, with which we uſe to be ſo tickled in free and familiar Converſation, where we are pleas'd with the Correſpondence of thoſe *Wits* that divert us; whilſt the Vanity of thoſe *Wits* finds its full Satisfaction in the Careſſes and Applauſes of its Hearers.

Theſe are, however, the two Things which contribute the moſt to deceive us in the Opinion we have of the quality of *Wit*; I would ſay Pride and Pleaſure. Pride cheats thoſe who pretend to have *Wit*; becauſe it blinds and puffs them up: Pleaſure cheats thoſe who admire them, becauſe it pre-ingages them in favour of the

the pretended *Wits* who give them this Pleaſure.

In like manner, two Things very oppoſite to thoſe above mentioned, may make us very uneaſy in the Company of thoſe whom we properly ought to call *Stupid*; *viz.* Their Slowneſs or Timidity, which makes them diſtruſt themſelves; and the Impatience, or Diſguſt they cauſe, which makes them troubleſome to others.

To convince ones ſelf of theſe Truths, it is very requiſite to make a ſerious Reflection on three Things. The *firſt*, what we commonly underſtand by the Word *Wit*, and who are the Perſons to whom we ordinarily give this Qualification. The *ſecond*, what is the Genius, and what Diſpoſitions of Body and Mind are to be found in thoſe ſorts of Perſons. And *laſtly*, if it be truly the Mind, or ſome other inherent Quality of the Soul, as for Example, the Imagination and the Memory, which is the Cauſe of *Wit*, and which deceives, by the ſecret Pride it inſpires, or by the ſenſible Pleaſure it affords.

It will not be leſs neceſſary in the next place to make the ſame, or very near the ſame Reflections on thoſe we call *Stupid*; to know if there be no more requir'd to underſtand

underſtand them, than a ſimple Judgment on their outward Appearance, or, if it be requiſite to examine more nicely their Character. Let us begin with *Wit*.

VII.

Tho' we are not very well ſatisfied what we ought to call *Wit*, there are however certain Characters, which fix, in ſome meaſure, this general Term; and ſhow us who they are, upon whom we moſt commonly beſtow it.

A Perſon who with a free Air, certain meaſur'd, but eaſie Motions, begins by agreeably moving thoſe he meets with; who in the next place produces on the Subject in debate, new and ſingular Thoughts, which he adorns with Expreſſions natural and lively, who has the Secret to make them receiv'd, as trivial and confus'd as they are, by piercing and bold Strokes which delicately touch the Hearers; is almoſt every where taken for a Man of Wit.

A Man of ſuch a Character never fails of Admirers. He is eſteem'd, follow'd, and applauded; and he himſelf diſcovers by the pleaſing Countenance of his Company, what favourable Diſpoſitions he has inſinu-

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ated in their Hearts. He admires himſelf for it in private, and perſuades himſelf he is Maſter of that Noble Quality we call *VVit*, which claims Diſtinction and Honour.

VIII.

Another perhaps, who not troubles himſelf ſo much about the Choice and Fineneſs of his Thoughts, makes himſelf never the leſs eſteem'd, by I know not what manner of lofty ſerious Diſcourſe, which attracts and draws Admiration. Tho' he is a great Talker, yet ſince he talks well, varies his Converſation, and ſteals ſmoothly from one Subject to another; we hear him without uneaſineſs, and follow him without taking notice whether he does not lead us too far: Always lively and quick in his Diſcourſe, his Action hides the extent of it; and makes us ſlip over his uſeleſs Digreſſions. If we nicely examine him, he is ready at Repartee; he neither heſitates nor confounds himſelf; he amuſes, he poſſeſſes us, and has ſome Pretence to the Title of *VVit*, if he eſcapes the Malice of great Talkers like himſelf, and avoids to repeat Things which were once thought diverting; I mean, If he has the

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Secret to ſurpriſe us always with new Matters.

A *Wit* of this Character, with all his Vivacity, pleaſes not ſo well as the firſt. The Things, he ſays, being not ſo extraordinary, are not ſo charming; however they meet with Acceptance, and have their Time. The other is like an artificial Fire-work, which at the firſt ſight dazles and ſurprizes; but is as ſoon ſpent, and ſhews it ſelf only by intervals; but it is with the latter as with thoſe Fires which are not indeed ſo ſparkling, but laſt longer. 'Tis the great Variety that makes this ſort of *Wit*; as an exquiſite one, or ſuch as is thought ſo, makes the other.

IX.

There is a third ſort of Men who take leſs care to think, than talk well. They are very nice and curious in the choice of Words, and fine Terms; but empty and void of good Senſe and ſolid Inſtructions. What they ſay has nothing remarkable in it, yet it pleaſes, becauſe it is ſet out with Modiſh Expreſſions.

There is a kind of ſingular Language, which is in uſe at ſome certain Times, and amongſt certain People. The Vul-

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gar have their Words and manner of ſpeaking; the *Beau Monde* has theirs. The inferiour Sort affect the uſe of antiquated Words, Proverbs, and trivial Equivocations, even amongſt Perſons of Quality, Proverbs, Equivocations, Puns, and Quibbles were formerly in credit; but the Politeneſs of the Age has brought them to neater Expreſſions, to a leſs vulgar Language, to more delicate Figures, and a leſs Affectation of fine Words. But there is a knack in ſetting Things off to the beſt Advantage, a ſingular way to pleaſe, which, tho' ſtudy'd, we indeavour to make it ſeem natural.

If there are many who either know it not, or who neglect it, there are others who have a wonderful Talent in making a ſeaſonable uſe of it. With Words free and eaſie, a Pronunciation clear and bold, and a certain Tone of the Voice, they make even Trifles well receiv'd. They pleaſe without our knowing either how, or where; and becauſe we little diſtruſt what Delights, we willingly rank them among the *Wits*. This Quality they injoy till the Mode comes to deſpiſe and reject them, when not being able to leave off thoſe common and vulgar Expreſſions, nor accuſtom themſelves freely, and without conſtraint to a new Language, and another

ther kind of Delicacy, they are look'd upon as Men of the laſt Age.

X.

There is another ſort of *VVits*, whoſe principal deſign is not ſo much to get Eſteem as to provoke Laughter; for a Man cannot well aim at one, without forfeiting the other. Theſe Gentlemen are happy in good Words, they meet with lucky ſeaſonable Sayings, Sport and Droll prettily, Rally and Jeſt with an Air which diſpoſes us to Mirth. They have I know not what ſort of a Talent, to extract from the meaneſt Subject ſomething to amuſe and divert the Company with. Which if they do with a good Grace, and happily nick the Time, Place, and Perſons to whom they are agreeable, they are then pleaſant Men, and at the ſame time facetious *VVits*. And, if they are not ſuch every where and at all times, 'tis becauſe we are not always diſpos'd to laugh, and that Good and Evil in no Caſe whatſoever come nearer to one another than in Jeſting and Rallery.

XI.

I ſhould never have done ſhould I undertake to draw the Picture of all thoſe who paſs in the World for Men of *Wit*. For as every one Judges according to his Inclinations, I muſt enumerate as many ſorts of them as there are different Genius's and Judgments. Beſides, I find that all Men wou'd regulate *Wit*, according to their own Fancy, and likewiſe would have it in Perfection. Now if our Modeſty will not permit us ſometimes to ſuffer Men to tell us that we have *Wit*, tho' it pleaſes us never ſo much to be complemented with it; yet we cannot diſſemble our Trouble, when they reproach and laugh at us for want of it. Therefore I ſhall only inſiſt upon theſe four ſorts of Characters, becauſe they ſeem to have ſome ground to challenge the Reputation of *Wits*; and that in Converſation they are always ſuppoſed to have more *Wit* than others.

Yet if we look narrowly into theſe Things, we ſhall find but little ground for it, there being nothing in any of the four Characters I have drawn, which can juſtly entitle them to the Name of *Wits*. In the firſt we ſee nothing but a falſe Light,

a fallacious Glittering which ſtrikes and ſeduces. In the ſecond, nothing but a great facility of Expreſſion, with a wonderful liberty of talking ſuperficially of all Things, acquired and cultivated by a long Exerciſe and Habitude. In the third, nothing but a certain Method of Converſation got by Rote, which the *Beau Monde* by their uſe Authorizes, and to which the Mode for ſome time gives a ſort of Reputation. In the fourth, we find nothing for the moſt part, but the foppery of a very poor creeping and cringing *Wit*, whoſe Capacity never carries him beyond Trifles. In all theſe four, or others that reſemble them, (for we met with but too many) we cannot but diſcover a great Emptineſs, which can only pleaſe or amuſe thoſe who prefer what diverts, to what inſtructs them.

You will agree with me as to the Truth of this, provided 'tis not apply'd to ſome Perſons whom you may think theſe Pictures fit, and for whom, perhaps, you are already prepoſſeſſed. For, if you compare what I have ſaid of them, with their Actions and Converſation, at the ſame time when they act their Parts ſo notably, I run the danger of being diſapprov'd, and then it will be very difficult for me to bring you

you to be of my mind. But if after the firſt Impreſſion is over, you will reflect upon thoſe Things which you thought ſo fine, and ſo ingenious, and with which you have been ſo ſenſibly pleas'd, you will return from your Surpriſe when ever you ſeriouſly conſider it, with the ſame eaſe as you may recover from a Dream which vaniſhes as ſoon as you are well awake.

The great Point conſiſts in examining Things narrowly and in themſelves, before we paſs our Judgments. There are very few Perſons who will give themſelves that Leiſure and Trouble; and amongſt thoſe who do, the greateſt part are rather guided by their Inclinations, than by Reaſon and Truth, and ſo confound obſcure Notions with clear and diſtinct Knowledge. We ought not therefore to be aſtoniſh'd, if People are deceiv'd, and if the Error they lie under as to the Subject of *VVit* is ſo general.

To make it more clear and evident, having made ſome Remarks on what is commonly call'd *VVit*, and who thoſe are to whom we ordinarily attribute that Quality, let us paſs to the ſecond Reflection, which I ſaid we ought to make on that Subject, and let us ſee what is the Genius, or what

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are the Diſpoſitions of Body and Mind in thoſe ſorts of Perſons.

XII.

The whole World almoſt is convinc'd, that Man is compos'd of two different Parts, *viz.* Soul and Body; and I believe there are very few Men of ſenſe who ſeriouſly make a doubt of this Difference, particularly if they have ſeen and perus'd thoſe Demonſtrations, which a very learned Philoſopher of our Age has laid down.

Thoſe two Subſtances are ſo ſtrictly united during Life, and their Connexion is ſo great, that they communicate one to the other almoſt all that happens to them; and as if they had inviolably promis'd each other this reciprocal Communication; there is no change in the Body that the Soul is not immediately affected with, as there is none in the Soul but what is communicated at the ſame inſtant to the Body. Such is, as all the World knows, the Order of Nature, unleſs ſome Alteration in the Body hinders it.

Notwithſtanding the great Intelligence that is between the Soul and the Body, yet it is not ſo obſcure, but we may diſcover

cover the ſecret by conſidering ſeparately the one and the other, and in particular, the different Springs and Wheels which are in the Body to make it act. But, becauſe it would be to no purpoſe to make an intire Deſcription here, I will ſlip over it in ſilence; ſuppoſing that thoſe Perſons to whom I ſpeak have at leaſt a general knowledge of the Structure of Human Bodies; and that they underſtand what I ſay when I talk of Arteries, Veins, and thoſe Humours they contain; and what I mean when I talk of the Brain, Nerves, Fibres, and Animal Spirits, and that they alſo know ſomething of their proper Functions in the Body.

This being ſuppos'd, and looking carefully into the diverſe Characters of *Wit*, of which I have already diſcours'd, with relation to their Natural Temper, that is to ſay, to the Diſpoſitions of their Bodies, and to the different Impreſſions the Motions of the Animal Spirits and the Blood cauſe in the Mind; 'tis eaſie to perceive, that all the Beauty and Excellence of their Genius is only the pure effect of Chance, and of a certain Order of the Parts of the Machine; that all is the reſult of an accidental Mixture of different Humours amongſt themſelves, and of a ſort of Animal

mal Spirits, more or less fine or agitated; and very often from the great Alterations which are occasion'd in our Bodies, and consequently in our Minds, by the Air we breath, the Nourishment we receive, the Liquors we make use of, either for our Pleasure or Necessity; our Occupations, our Exercises, and in one word, all our different Ways and Methods of Life and Action.

We may imagine, for example, and we see it every day by experience, that those *Wits* that gain so much Reputation in Company by their sparkling and new Thoughts, tho' false, and by the lively Sentiments they excite in others, should have a very fine Blood, full of volatile Salt, from which are form'd the animal Spirits also very fine, and in continual motion; which passing through the Nerves, and small Fibres of the Brain, make an Impression naturally follow'd with quick and lively Sense, which never fails of animating the Speaker, and as it were by a counter-stroke the Hearers.

The Constitution we commonly call Bilious, is in my opinion, the most proper Temper for this sort of *Wits*. The Blood boils more in them, than in others, and circulates more nimbly. The different Fer-

Fermentations it draws from the Viſcera in circulating are more efficatious and powerful. There is more volatil Salt in proportion, than other Principles. And, if beſides this they obſerve a delicate Diet, breath a ſharp Air, and uſe a moderate Exerciſe, all thoſe Things muſt contribute to the Quickneſs of their Fancy, or (to uſe the Expreſſion in Mode) to the Elegance of their *Wit*.

XIII.

In like manner that other Species of *Wit*, which prepoſſeſſes us by I know not what ſort of ſolid Diſcourſe, well carried on and diverſify'd, by a free and eaſie Pronounciation, and by great and wonderful Volubility and Fluentneſs, which ſeems to aim at Truth, tho' it goes aſtray every moment, and leads the Hearers into Error. Such *Wit* may perhaps be nothing but the Effect of a ſulphureous inflamed Blood, whoſe particles are very proper to produce a great quantity of Animal Spirits, not only eaſie and ready to take fire, but alſo keep it in much longer; occaſion'd as much by the great quantity of the matter of which they are form'd,

as by their light quality and aptneſs to take fire.

The Pipes of the Nerves and Brain in thoſe Men are eaſily penetrated; their Fibres are ſupple, and their Animal Spirits paſs eaſily through the Orifices and Pores which receive them. The Soul indeed is not in ſo lively a manner touch'd by the Impreſſions they make, as in the firſt ſort of *Wits*; but it is fill'd enough to be intirely taken up with it, and to let it ſelf be drawn over by continual Impreſſions occaſion'd by that uninterrupted courſe of Animal Spirits, while thoſe Impreſſions are made almoſt in the ſame manner in thoſe that give ear to thoſe great and pompous Diſcourſes which this ſort of *Wits* make uſe of to expreſs their Meaning.

Sulphur is the moſt predominant in thoſe of this Character; as the volatil Salt is in the others. They abound in Animal Spirits and Blood; but the Ferments which are furniſhed by the Viſcera, being not ſo piercing, nor the Humours ſo ſharp, their Motions are the more moderate, and by conſequence laſt the longer. In that very Thing therefore do's probably conſiſt the pretended extent of *Wit* of thoſe Men, who we only admire for want of taking notice that it is only

only the Extent of their Imagination which ſurprizes.

A nice and delicate Conſtitution, Fibres thin and fine, the Animal Spirits very light, the Blood and Humours of an indifferent Conſiſtence, becauſe of the Fluidity of their Parts, make, in my Opinion, thoſe ſuperficial vain *VVits*, which one modiſh Word, and affected foppiſh Way of Talking that humours the Times, a Phraſe prettily turn'd make often paſs for *Polite* and *Fine VVits*. They have not Strength enough of Mind to ſupport them in a rational Diſcourſe, and want both Vivacity and Penetration, but they pleaſe by I know not what kind of Air and affected Meen they uſe, and by a kind of unuſual Language, call'd, the Language of the *Beau Monde*, that is to ſay, of certain Perſons who have no other Title to be thought Delicate, Nice, and Polite, but becauſe they are Effeminate.

Women being for the moſt part of a Conſtitution naturally feeble, becauſe their blood and Humours hold more from the Nature of Water than any other Principle, and their Brain is of a ſoft Conſiſtence, becauſe their Fibres are fine and ſlender, their Animal Spirits, which in Truth are agitated enough, but feeble, weak, and light, and by conſequence very eaſily diſſi-

pated, come nearer this Character of *Wit*, than any other: The Difficulty they have to give a ſerious Attention to any thing abſtracted and above the Senſes, the diſlike they conceive for all ſolid Reaſoning, fully proves the Delicateneſs of their Imagination, or, what is here much the ſame thing, the Weakneſs of their Minds.

Their Brain being eaſy to be mov'd by the leaſt Agitations, and even to receive very violent Diſturbances from the ſmalleſt Motions, they are in a Manner Slaves to all ſenſible things. They ſearch and conſider no farther than the Out-ſide of things; and not being able to penetrate deeper, think nothing fine but the Cloaths which cover and adorn them. As they are the beſt Judges of modiſh Carriage and Faſhions, they can reliſh nothing but what has a Dependence on them. Some new affected way of Talking, certain Words *a la Mode*, do ſo infinitely pleaſe and charm them, that they cannot ſufficiently applaud ſuch as make uſe of them. And becauſe the Folly of the Times countenances and protects thoſe little foppiſh Turns or Expreſſion, they place the Standard of *Wit* in them, and cannot believe any one to be an *Aſs*, who has the miſerable Talent to prepoſſeſs and pleaſe them in that Point.

XV. The

XV.

The Freedom and Eaſineſs of ſome Men to Jeſt and Rally, or their Facility and Readineſs of *Wit* to raiſe the loweſt Things, and depreſs the higheſt, to contract or magnify Objects, (wherein conſiſts what we call Burleſque) makes me believe that this ſort of People cannot want Animal Spirits, both ſharp and agitated, that are of Force to make particular Impreſſions in the Brain, with a Facility equal to the Velocity of their Motion, and that the Fibres or Humours do leſs obſtruct or oppoſe their Courſe in the Channels they run.

The Matter which the Blood conveys to the Head to produce this ſort of *Wit*, ought to be of a pretty ſteddy Conſiſtence, that they may have the Power freely, and without trouble, to open ſeveral Paſſages, by which they may form in the Brain the particular Images of what they deſign to repreſent, and diſpoſe the reſt of the Body at the ſame time to a Meen and Behaviour ſuitable to thoſe lively Repreſentations.

The Impreſſion which theſe Animal Spirits make in the Brain being ſingular, the Soul is the more lively affected with the Sence of it. Jocoſe Men are the firſt

affected with it, who afterwards agreeably move others by way of Repercuſſion. And as it is accompany'd with Pleaſure and Mirth, ſo it is apt to make People believe a Jocoſe Man Witty.

That they have Wit, I own; but it is falſe and childiſh. A quick Fancy they have, but 'tis fooliſh and irregular, which never repreſents the true Idea of Things, but on the Contrary takes a great Care to diſguiſe and disfigure them by ſuch peculiar Notions as make them very unnatural, and by that means more ridiculous.

I know there is one ſort of Jeſting and Rallery which may be allow'd by Perſons of good *Wit* and *Senſe*; when being neither dull nor trifling, the Effect it commonly produces is not ſo much to lead us from Reaſon and Truth, as to make us more ſenſible of it. But it is ſo very difficult to keep a rallying Imagination within its juſt Bounds, that one always ought to fear it will exceed them.

The Salt that ought to ſeaſon and give a Reliſh to our Rallery imprints ſuch Notions in the Brain as we cannot eaſily forget and wipe out; for they renew and increaſe in ſpight of us. 'Tis a ſlippery dangerous Path, and one falſe Step throws us from the

the moſt nice and delicate Rallery, into the moſt abſurd Follies.

I do not mean therefore to ſpeak here only of thoſe *Little VVits* who have made this falſe Step, who laugh and make a Jeſt of every Thing, and turn the moſt ſerious Things into Ridicule. A rallying *VVit* predominates in all their Diſcourſes; which makes them give a wrong Bias to all things. As they were born with that Genius, ſo they die with it. This Character I look upon for this Reaſon to be the loweſt, and meaneſt of all; becauſe the Imagination of Men of this Character is ſo irregular and deprav'd, that it ſcarce ever conveys any thing to the Mind but under peculiar and borrow'd Figures, which repreſent only pleaſant and ridiculous Fancies with which they are ſo infatuated, becauſe delighted with them, that it is not in their Power to turn their Thoughts to any thing that is good and ſerious; they being never ſo pleaſant, as when they ſay the greateſt Follies.

They do not laſt long I confeſs, for we are ſoon weary of them. They make at laſt a very fooliſh Figure; but they reign for a time, and have their ſottiſh Admirers. They are favourably receiv'd, and diſtinguiſh'd in the beſt Companies; and, which

is ſtrange, often eſteem'd beyond Men of good and ſolid *Judgment*.

XVI.

I cannot exactly lay down all the particular Diſpoſitions which concur in the forming of *Wits*, nor give you Phyſical Reaſons of all their Differences. There are ſo many Kinds, that it would be as difficult for me to deſcribe them all here, as for a Painter to draw faithfully to the Life in one Piece all the Faces which are in the World. What I can ſay, is, That there is one Point to which all thoſe different *Wits* may be reduc'd, as there is one Figure in the Face to which all Faces have ſome likeneſs. This point is a certain Diſpoſition of the Brain and the Animal Spirits, a ſportive Imagination, the ſecret Springs and Wheels of the Machine, which I ſhall explain hereafter. The Mind, or rational Soul, is not concern'd in it: If it be, 'tis only for thoſe agreeable or diſagreeable Sentiments it receives, becauſe of its Union with the Body, which Sentiments are fruitful Springs of Blindneſs and Error.

A Perſon of good and ſolid *Senſe* may receive the ſame Sentiments, without falling into the ſame Errors. If his Imagination endeavours to miſlead and ſeduce him, Reaſon,

Reaſon, by which he is govern'd, ſoon helps to undeceive him. His Reaſon is not free from the Illuſion of the Senſes. The Blood and Animal Spirits of ſuch a Perſon have their Courſe and particular Agitations as thoſe of other Men, and you may obſerve in his Body ſuch Diſpoſitions as may ſerve to explain thoſe of his Mind. But if his Conſtitution does very much contribute to the Soundneſs of his Judgment, the good uſe he makes of his Reaſon turns the Happineſs of his Conſtitution to a wonderful Advantage. And though ſome Conſtitutions of Body contribute equally to a ſound *Judgment*, and ready *Wit*, we ought in this caſe to ſet a greater Value upon whatever proceeds from the part of *Judgment*, than what comes from that of *Wit*. My Reaſon is, becauſe a Man of *Wit* follows ſolely his Senſes, and ſuffers himſelf to be carried away by a lively Imagination; whereas a ſound *Judgment* reſiſts that Folly, in order to raiſe it ſelf above it and regulate it. Therefore what I have ſaid before is but rational, that a Man of *Wit* is only ſo far ſo, as the Conſtitution of his Body inclines him to it, and that it is properly the Machine only that acts in ſuch Perſons.

Make but the leaſt Reflections on what paſſes in common Converſation, and you'll find ſenſible and notable Proofs of what I have laid down; and Experience will convince you that what is ſaid of the Imagination of Men of *Wit* is no Fiction of my own.

Such a one had *Wit* formerly, and was the Wonder of the Town, who now ſays not four witty Sentences in a Week, and thoſe not free but forc'd. The Reaſon is, that thoſe Animal Spirits which were proper to open certain Pores of the Brain are not now ſo brisk; that the Matter of which they were produc'd is no more the ſame, or at leaſt not ſo copious; the Orifices of the Heart are ſometimes ſtraiten'd by the Nerves which encompaſs them, and the Blood does not circulate with the ſame Force and Swiftneſs as formerly. Some Paſſions, as for Example Sorrow, or Grief, may be the Occaſion.

There are others, who ſtill retaining their uſual Strength and Vivacity of Mind, yet cannot ſhew it but with a ſtrange unevenneſs of Temper. They have unlucky Melancholy Days, when it is apparent the Sprightlineſs of their *Wit* has not its wonted Heat and Luſtre. And what ſhould be the Reaſon of it, but ſome Moiſtneſs in the Brain

Brain which ſtifles and Quenches this Fire, ſome Seroſity which ſtops the Courſe of the Spirits, or perhaps their being determined to run through ſome other Orifices, either for the Convenience and Neceſſity of the Machine, or ſome other Occaſion?

If I add that the Liver, the Spleen and the other *Viſcera* inceſſantly furniſh Ferments which diſorder the Maſs of Blood a thouſand different ways; that the Circulation is ſometimes ſtopt, ſometimes precipitated according as the Arteries and the Heart are contracted or enlarg'd; that the Brain is more or leſs moiſten'd according to the Quantity of Seroſitie ſtrain'd thro' the Glands; that the Animal Spirits are more or leſs abounding, groſs or ſubtile, according to the Qantity and Quality of the Matter which goes to the Head to produce them; that there is a natural Order of the Parts, and particularly of the Fibres, which ſhapes the Paſſages through which the Spirits run with more eaſe than through others; if I further add, that exterior Objects and Paſſions make, as is well known, ſtrange Alterations in the Body, and by a neceſſary Conſequence very violent Impreſſions on the Soul. All theſe Conſiderations will help us to give a Reaſon for all the divers Effects of the Imagination, its Mori-

ons and Illusions will doubtless induce you to undeceive your self, and to stand upon your Guard against all its Surprises. For I declare it in one Word, what we commonly call to have *Wit*, consists in nothing but in a certain Turn of the Imagination, fantastical and singular, which the brisker and livelier it is, the more it surprizes. But, least I should be reproach'd for making too bold a Determination, I will more exactly and strictly inquire into it, it being the Third Point that I propos'd to my self to examine.

XVII.

Imagination counterfiets *Wit* so dexterously, that one may very easily be mistaken; and if you go no further than the Out-side, you would think it the same thing call'd by two different Names. Yet in reality they are two Things differing more in their Nature than Name; and whoever will take the Pains to consider and compare them, will find most essential Differences, as follows:

Tho' we have not a perfect Knowledge of the Nature of our Soul, we nevertheless know enough to assure us, whenever we recollect our selves, that it cannot be a part of the Body to which it is united. The first

first and the sole Proprieties of the Soul are to *Think* and *Perceive*; those of all sorts of Bodies, to be *Extended* and *Figur'd*. Now *Thought* and *Perception*, *Extent* and *Figure*, are Properties far distant in their own Natures, and such as no rational Man can conceive to be consistent in one and the same Subject.

For that very Reason every one may, in considering himself internally, know that the Soul is an immaterial Substance, uncompounded, indivisible, alone capable to know, to judge, to reason, to will, love, fear, hope, imagine and perceive, many ways and manners. He may know, I say, that as it is absolutely different from the Body, so it has Proprieties which are only agreeable to it self, independantly from the same Body; as for example, the Proprieties of knowing, judging and willing; but that being at present so straitly united to the Body, it has also some Proprieties depending on it, as those of *Imagination* and *Perception*.

All things that are the Objects of our Knowledge are of two sorts, either Spiritual or Material; and as they are of two kinds in their Nature extreamly distant, so the manner by which the Soul perceives them must also be very different. For there

there ought to be a Proportion between the things we know and the manner of knowing them. Now Spiritual Things cannot be known but abstractedly. God, for example, our own Thoughts, general and universal Ideas, our Will, Inclinations, Judgments, Truth, Justice, Perfection, Reason, are Things only known by the Soul, without the help of the Senses. But as for Material Things, the Soul cannot perceive them but in a sensible and gross manner; *viz.* either by the Impression they make on the Senses, which is call'd *Perception*, or by the Images it forms of them in the Brain which is called *Imagination*.

XVIII.

I shall not make it my business to prove all these Things Philosophically, which have been already confirm'd by very good Authors. Those that have a further curiosity, may see the Demonstrations they have given, in those Books they have written on this Subject. 'Tis sufficient for me to observe what is proper to the Body alone, what to the Soul only, and what concerns the Soul and Body jointly; that the great Difference between those Things being made plain to us, we may not confound them.

In

In effect what do we ſee as to the Body we animate, but divers ſorts of Parts, ſolid and fluid, ſubtile and groſs, which by their ſingular Order and different Figures, make a compound ſuſceptible of diverſe Motions?

But, as to the Soul, without admitting any extent or diviſion of Parts, we diſcover a Subſtance, a Being, which thinks, knows, wills, and determines its ſelf.

Taking afterwards the Soul and Body together, we may obſerve, that if among our different ſorts of Knowledge we have any without the help of the Body, there are ſome alſo that we have only by its means; that ſome things there are which the Soul immediately and by it ſelf knows without any relation to the Body; but that there are other Things which it does not know but by relation to it.

I call the firſt manner of knowing, *Underſtanding*, and *Knowledge*; the ſecond, *Sentiment* and *Imagination*.

Sentiment is a Perception of the Soul, which is afterwards produc'd from the Action of the Outward Objects of the Body, and the Agitation of the Nerves and Spirits which extends its ſelf to a certain part of the Brain. Imagination is a Perception of the Soul, occaſion'd by an impreſſion

preſſion made upon the Body by the Action of exterior Objects, but by the Agitation of the interiour Fibres of the Brain, produc'd by the interiour Motion of the Animal Spirits; whether it is becauſe this Agitation proceeds from the very Will it ſelf of the Soul, or only from an unexpected Courſe of the Spirits, which paſs accidentally through certain Pores rather than others.

So that this manner of thinking which we call *Imagining*, to ſpeak properly, conſiſts only in the interiour Application of the Mind, to the Deſcriptions or Images drawn or imprinted in our Brain by the Action of the Animal Spirits.

And on the contrary, that manner of Thinking which we call *Conceiving*, conſiſts only in the application of the Mind, to pure and intelligible Ideas, ſeparated from all ſenſible Impreſſions and corporeal Images.

As for example, when I think of certain Numbers, as 2, 4, 8. the Ideas I have of them I perceive by the Mind alone, and that only Propriety of the Soul which I call Underſtanding. I judge alſo of the Relation which is between thoſe Ideas, as that 4 is the half of 8, and the double of 2, without the help of any Senſe or Image.

Yet

Yet if I caſt my Eyes on the Character 4, which was invented to expreſs the Idea of this Number; the impreſſion that will then be made on my Eyes by that Figure, and by the Optick Nerves in my Brain, will cauſe a ſentiment in the Soul, and make the intelligible Idea which I have of this Number 4 ſenſible. Thus in what I ſhall conceive, there will be both Sentiment and Idea.

If when I think upon the Number 4 I do not ſtop at the meer Idea I have of it, but apply my Mind to the Deſcription or Image the Animal Spirits imprint in my Brain, and which repreſent this Figure 4, tho' no more before my Eyes, than I imagine. So that I both Conceive and Imagine.

But it will be alſo of importance to obſerve, that neither the Sentiment I receive by the Colour and Figure of this Character, nor the Image I have of it in my Brain, make the Idea of the Number to which I joyn them more diſtinct, tho' cauſing a deeper Impreſſion; nor do they conſequently render the judgments and Concluſions I ſhall draw from this Idea more rational or more coherent. On the contrary, I ſhall make it appear, that the Senſes and Imagination very often darken

ken our Light, and ſpoil our Underſtanding.

XIX.

Let us take another Example leſs abſtracted; if I think of a Square, the Idea I have of it ſhews me four ſides joyn'd by their Extreams. I need only the light of the Mind to ſee it, and alſo to hold, if I pleaſe, ſeveral Arguments on the Proprieties I diſcover in this Idea.

To join the Sentiment to the Idea, I need only draw with my Pen on this Paper four Lines that ſhall meet at their four ends. □

The white and black of this Figure, ſtrike my Eyes, move the filaments of the Nerves and the Animal Spirits; and my Soul immediately receives a Sentiment, which anſwers to the motion of the Fibres of the Brain. There is the intelligible Idea made ſenſible.

To imagine this Square, when I have no Figure like it before my Eyes, I need only turn my Mind towards my Body, and apply it to the Image which the Animal Spirits ſhall imprint of it in my Brain. Then I ſhall imagine a Square which before I did but conceive, that is to ſay, I ſhall not only ſee this Square as a Figure terminated by four

four Sides and four Lines, but I ſhall conſider thoſe four Lines as preſent by the force and application of my Mind; with this difference only, that the pure Idea render'd as it were palpable and ſenſible, will then affect and move me, whereas before it did only ſhew it ſelf. This Senſation will ſupport, if you will, the Idea and Arguments I ſhall make on thoſe Proprieties; but will not augment my Knowledge; On the contrary, it may happen, that being taken up with the Image or Sentiment, and not at all with the pure Idea, I may ſtop at firſt ſight at one, and ſtray altogether from the other.

XX.

To make this clearer by more familiar inſtances, let us ſuppoſe that I read, or hear pronounc'd one or more words join'd together; as for example this Italian Proverb; *Dove è Amore, quivi è Fede, where Love is, there is Fidelity.* What I preſently find, is, that the ſound of thoſe words pronounc'd ſtrikes my Ears, as the reading the Characters of the ſame words ſtrike my Eyes; and from which ſide ſoever theſe Impreſſions come, 'tis certain that the motion of the Nerves which extends it ſelf to the principal part of the Brain, produces a Sentiment

Sentimen in the Soul which ſtirs up the Idea which Men have agreed to faſten to thoſe Terms. For it depends on them to fix the Ideas they have of Things, to ſuch and ſuch Sounds, and to ſuch and ſuch Characters rather than to others, as they pleaſe. Thus in what I apprehend by hearing thoſe words; *where Love is, there is Fidelity*, there is Sentiment and pure Idea.

But the Imagination may be ſaid here to have ſome Part in it; if conſidering thoſe Ideas which I have of *Love*, and *Fidelity*, I find my ſelf ſo us'd to ſee thoſe Ideas joyn'd to the Impreſſion that the Sound or the Character of the Terms which expreſs them have often form'd in our Brain, that I cannot eaſily repreſent them ſeparately to my ſelf, as very ſeldom we can, and that I apply my ſelf to the Expreſſions as ſoon as to the Things ſignifi'd by them; for then thoſe pure Ideas will become ſenſible, becauſe of the Connexion that is between Them and the Impreſſi-preſſion of the Terms to which they are joyn'd. This Union becomes ſo cloſe by our being uſed to ſee them ſo united, that we cannot ſometimes think of the Idea without imagining the Expreſſion, nor imagine the Expreſſion without reviving the Idea.

This

This ſhould not make us believe that the Sounds or Characters produce in the Brain, Impreſſions and Images which reſemble in any thing the Ideas we conceive when we reflect on thoſe Impreſſions. The truth is, they are ſo ſtraitly united by our being accuſtomed to ſee them in this Union, that one would think they do but one and the ſame thing, and that to *Conceive* and *Imagine* is but one and the ſame manner of *Thinking*.

XXI.

Far from confounding the Impreſſions made in the Brain with the Ideas which offer themſelves to the Mind, we cannot ſo much as ſay there is any Reſemblance betwixt them; ſince altogether different Words and Characters make us underſtand the ſame Things. As for example, when I hear pronounc'd by one that ſpeaks Italian theſe Words, *Amore*, *Fede*, thoſe Terms immediately awake in my Mind the ſame Ideas as theſe other Words pronounc'd in Engliſh, *Love*, *Fidelity*, which ſignifie the ſame thing, tho' the Sound is very different, and by conſequence the Impreſſion made of it in my Brain.

Not

Not only different Words may explain the ſame Things, but different Things may be explain'd by the ſame Words and Characters. Thus, if a Man who talks Latin pronounces in my Preſence this Word *Cor*, I ſhall immediately underſtand by this Word the Heart, one of the noble Parts of the Body; but if another ſhould pronounce it who talks French, I ſhall think he means a hunting Inſtrument call'd a Horn, which are two different things expreſs'd by the ſame Sound and Characters, which by conſequence can only produce the ſame Motion and the ſame Impreſſion in my Brain, although they produce different Ideas in the Soul.

By this we ſee that the Union of Images and pure Ideas we have of Things is every way Arbitrary, and there being no eſſential Relation between one and the other, the Motion of the Spirits and the Impreſſion of the Brain can at the moſt but ſerve to awake in us the Things, * not produce them, to apply our Mind to thoſe very ſame Things,

* *I do not here pretend to explain from whence we have our Ideas of things, from whence they proceed, nor how they are form'd; becauſe 'tis nothing to my Subject. I ſhall only endeavour to ſhew, that the Senſes and Imagination do not produce them, and cannot enlighten us.*

not

not to form them. Whence it manifeſtly follows, that whenever we proceed to paſs Judgment without conſidering narrowly thoſe Ideas, or going no farther than our Senſations and Fancies, our Inferences are falſe and raſh, and that ſo much the more as thoſe Fancies and Senſations are more quick and lively, by Reaſon that the Motion of the Spirits being more violent, the Impreſſion of the Brain deeper, and the Images better drawn, the Soul cannot but be more poſſeſs'd by them. And as we are naturally taken up with what pleaſes us, the Application of the Soul will be much greater towards its Senſations and Fancies, than its Attention to the true Idea of things which appear before it, but make no Impreſſion. The Soul may be ſo ſenſibly touch'd, that it may wander and ſtray, and erring from the clear Light of Reaſon, it ſhall give it ſelf wholly up to the Obſcurity of its Sentiments, or the Illuſions of its Imagination, which, as I have ſaid, may imploy the Soul, but can diſcover nothing to it; may bring it out to behold, but can ſhew it nothing.

This may ſeem to ſome Men too ſerious, if not an inſipid Diſcourſe. However 'tis allowable, to explain a Subject upon which I could determine nothing without theſe previous

previous Reflections, unleſs I ſhould fall into the Weakneſs of our *Modern VVits*, and pretend to diſpute without Grounds, or perſuade without Reaſon.

XXII.

Imagination then is far different from Wit, that is to ſay, from Reaſon and good Senſe; for thoſe three Terms expreſs one and the ſame Thing; and *VVit*, which is nothing but Imagination, is by conſequence far different from the ſolid true *Judgment* which it counterfeits. But let it be never ſo well metamorphos'd, as it does but mimick and cheat in Appearance, it falls far ſhort of excelling it.

All the Fault lies in thoſe who are miſtaken in it; for a Man of *Judgment* underſtands the Things he conſiders and judges of, by applying himſelf to the Spiritual Ideas he has of them, not in the leaſt by the Application of them to Corporeal Images in the Fancy, in which their Fault lies. For thoſe ſenſible Images repreſenting all Things confuſedly, it follows of courſe that the Imagination never has a clear Inſight into Things. The Mind conſiders the true Idea of Objects, to find their Difference and Proprieties; when the Fancy does but reflect

reflect upon the Impreſſion made of them in the Brain.

Thence it comes that a Man of *Judgment* fixes upon thoſe juſt and ſolid Grounds that confirm his Thoughts; whereas a *Wit* minds nothing but the agreeable or diſagreeable Sentiment which follow them. *A Man of Judgment* diffuſes his Knowledge, by inſtructing ſuch as receive it; but a *Wit*, with his Notions, ſurpriſes and cheats his Hearers. *The former* perſuades, becauſe he talks rationally; and a *Wit*, becauſe he Flatters.

A Man of Judgment begins firſt by gaining the Reaſon, and by that means very often the Hearts; but the buſineſs of a *Wit* is firſt to poſſeſs the Heart, and by that means debauch the Weak and Simple. In ſhort, a *Man* of *Judgment* minds nothing but Truth and Knowledge; and a *Wit* pleaſes himſelf only with Opinions and Probabilities.

Now becauſe Opinion has moſt commonly the Preference, and that we for the moſt part take Appearances of Truth for Truth it ſelf, what proceeds from the Imagination is ſuppoſed to come from the Mind, and we confound without any Reflection the one with the other. *Our Wits*, who only follow their Imaginations, cunningly

ningly give an impoſing Air of Truth to Opinions and Appearances of Truth; and even to things the moſt diſtant from Reaſon, a ſeducing Appearance of Reaſon. We are dazled with their fine Diſcourſes, and harmonious gingling of Words, and charm'd by the Delicacy or Novelty of their ſparkling Thoughts. We take an *Ignis fatuus* for a true Light, Viſions for Realities, and think our ſelves reaſonably perſuaded and convinc'd, when we are but agreeably tickled and flatter'd.

XXIII.

I have already given the Reaſon of this Miſtake. Humane Pride, Pleaſure, and the Inclination and Propenſity we have to any thing that flatters us, are the true Occaſions of it. When a *Wit* undertakes to diſcourſe on any Subject in Converſation, the ſenſible Impreſſion of the natural Force of his Imagination gives him a ſecret Confidence, which makes him gratify his ideas whatever they are, true or falſe, proper or improper. This Vanity does not ſuffer him to diſtruſt himſelf a Moment, but he reduces all to it; and, becauſe one would not willingly be deceiv'd, he forms to himſelf a certain Scheme of Reaſon, from whence all the Illuſions of his Wit proceed as from their Source and Fountain. With

With this falſe Confidence of himſelf he diſcourſes of every thing, boldly decides the moſt obſcure, and undertakes to unfold the moſt intricate Matters; and, as he obſerves ſome Order in his Diſcourſe, ſo one would think him a Maſter of the Argument. Becauſe he imagines well, we are apt to think he argues ſolidly.

There is nothing ſo common as this Miſtake in humane Society, more eſpecially in Queſtions which are ſometimes propos'd on divers Subjects by way of Converſation. While ſome Men, having both Truth and Reaſon on their ſide, can ſcarce be heard, and much leſs believ'd. Others who have the knack of managing neatly the Matter preſently gain Belief, not by the Strength of Reaſon, but by a certain Turn which they give their Thoughts.

The Pleaſure we take in the Converſation of a *Wit* does in ſome Manner inſlave our Minds to him; and our Reaſon weaken'd by that ſenſible Impreſſion, yields to its Power while it ſecretly owns the prevailing Advantage of the Imagination, by its agreeable Motions. Not, but that a good Air, and good Grace do extreamly ſet off whatever we do or ſpeak, tho' they do not really make what we ſay to be truer, or what we do to be more rational.

Appearances are nothing but Cheats, as well in reſpect to Wit as to the Heart, tho' leſs diſtruſted. A civil, handſom, ſober Man, who preſents himſelf with a good Grace, is preſently well receiv'd, and we conceive ſome eſteem for him; but one would not be oblig'd on thoſe Appearances, to anſwer for his Integrity. On the contrary we are apt at firſt ſight to proclaim that Man a Wit, who talks well, lively, briskly and agreeably, even before we have had time enough to judge whether he has as much in Effect, as he has in Appearance.

XXIV.

But ſome Men will ſay, is it a Defect to have Wit? to have it quick, polite, and agreeable? to have a fine, noble, delicate Fancy? Is it for nothing it was given us adorn'd with ſo many Graces? and muſt we ſcrupulouſly deny our ſelves the uſe of it? Is it a Sin to be ſenſible of its Charms? and ſhall People make us believe that to divert and pleaſe is a pernicious Qualification? Is it not rather one of thoſe Things of which *Seneca* ſpeaks, that is only cried down and exclaim'd againſt, by ſuch as want it? or, as *Pliny* ſays, one of thoſe Things of which we talk with Paſſion, becauſe we look upon it with Envy?

Having

Having thus explain'd my ſelf on the Nature of Imagination, and the Differences of *Wit* and *Judgment*, 'tis now incumbent upon me to declare what their Uſe is.

Whatever is ſerviceable may prove hurtful, and there is nothing ſo pernicious but may be made beneficial, when 'tis put to a good Uſe; I ſpeak only of Natural Things. Poyſon being well prepar'd becomes a Sovereign Remedy. I do not intend to cry down Imagination in all reſpects. It may indeed deceive a *Man of Judgment*: Sometimes it impoſes on him, and leads him out of the way; but this happens only, when he ſhamefully abandons his Reaſon, which alone ought to be the Guide of his Knowledge and Judgment; when he neglects his Reaſon ſo far as to deſpiſe it, to follow only Viſions and Chymera's.

Let us give to every Thing its due Merit and Place. *Judgment* ought to have the Precedence; *Wit*, or *Imagination*, ought to come after. Imagination muſt not have the Pre-eminence; but ſhould follow as an Aſſiſtant to our Weakneſs, and to ſupport us in the painful Labour of Attention to the true Idea of Things, ſo as to obtain a perfect Knowledge of them.

This Aſſiſtance is at preſent neceſſary for us, becauſe the Body over-powers the

Mind; and we must make a Vertue of Necessity, and extract from the Body what may raise us above it. We ought to help our selves with sensible Ideas, as real Assistants in the Consideration of Spiritual Ideas. The Sensations being Modifications of the Soul which touch and penetrate it, must of necessity affect it much more than abstracted Ideas, which only appear without touching it.

The Mind faints and languishes at the bare Description of Truths; and is often discourag'd by the Trouble and Pain it takes in the Discovery of them. Whereas the Imagination revives and diverts it, fixes, supports, and cherishes its Thoughts, makes obscure things sensible to it, approaches the Distant, and brings them to its Touch. It polishes the gross Ideas, gives a Substance to the most subtle and airy; and the Soul apply'd to the divers Notions which are neatly and distinctly ingraven in the Brain, more easily perceives what would have been otherwise beyond its reach.

The quickest and most penetrating Minds stand in need of this Assistance; and there is none that can act without it, as long as it is join'd with the Body. 'Tis an unhappy but indispensible Necessity, because of the Dependance we have on sensible Things in this Life. 'Tis

'Tis not then a Defect, abſolutely ſpeaking, to have a ſtrong, quick, and fine Imagination; ſince it is of ſo great a help to Reaſon. But 'tis a very great Fault to pervert the Order of Nature, to make Reaſon wait upon Imagination, to prefer and delight only in this, and, by a ſhameful Injuſtice, carry it as it were in Triumph, and place it in the Seat of Reaſon, which we almoſt intirely darken and eclipſe.

Imagination makes in one ſenſe the Fineneſs, the Delicacy, and the Force of Wit; but 'tis only when it obeys the Orders of Reaſon. On the contrary, where it predominates we may impute all our Miſcarriages to it. That is, when the divers Impreſſions which are made in the Brain and the reſt of the Body, are only made by its Orders; when the Images which are form'd in the Fancy, are drawn and expung'd at its Pleaſure; when it receives no Laws but from it ſelf, in all its impetuous and irregular Motions. In this laſt ſenſe I affirm that 'tis a great Defect to have Wit; and a very vicious Quality to pleaſe no other way. A Quality we ought not in the leaſt to be fond of, it being rather to be fear'd than coveted; and if we ſpeak of it contemptibly, 'tis becauſe we behold it without Envy. The pretended Charms of the Imagi-

nation, the Delicacy and Graces of *VVit* are ſo many Snares laid for us; and we cannot too much diſtruſt them, particularly in Converſation, where we are ſo much the more eaſily ſurpriz'd, becauſe we have leſs time to think, and leſs Liberty to defend our ſelves.

I come now to thoſe Reflections which ſtill remain to be made on the Subject of *Stupidity*, having made thoſe which I propos'd to my ſelf on the Subject of *VVit*.

XXV.

This Term *Stupidity* ſeems to me no leſs equivocal than that of *VVit*. We either extend, or confine it more than we ought, Men being for the moſt part taken up with the obſcure and confuſed Ideas they have of Things, they content themſelves with the undeterminate and general Terms which expreſs them; without troubling themſelves to define them in particular. Thus, what difference ſoever there be between an *Honeſt Man* and an *Honeſt Man*, a *Man* of *VVit* and a *Man* of *VVit*, a *Stupid* and a *Stupid Man*, 'tis always to them the ſame Thing; and thoſe Diſtinctions ſo nice and uſeful paſs with them for nothing elſe but Trifles, which deſerve not to be taken notice of.

To

To ſhew you however how important thoſe Differences are to ſuch as will not venture to diſcourſe at random, 'tis but conſidering that all Qualities, whatſoever they be, are different according to the Genius of thoſe who enjoy them; that the Diverſity of the Genius proceeds partly from the Difference of the Conſtitution, Humour and Education; and as thoſe Things change, ſo the Genius and Qualities of the Mind take different Forms.

'Tis for this Reaſon that Vice or Vertue in ſome Perſons, has ſomething very ſingular which diſtinguiſhes it from the ſame Species of Vice and Vertue in others. One would think their Qualities acquire a particular Character which ſeparate them from all others by the Diſpoſition of the Mind of thoſe which have them. They retain the ſame Name and general Reſemblance, and yet are not the ſame. We are apt to miſtake in it, becauſe very often we have but one and the ſame Term to expreſs very different Things; which makes us confound them. The Terms of *Stupidity* or *Folly* ſerve to denote the different Diſpoſitions of Mind in two Perſons which paſs for *Block-heads* or *Fools*. Nevertheleſs the *Stupidity* of the one is nothing near the ſame with that of the other.

This Term may give very different Ideas, and we are almoſt ſure to be miſtaken by it, if we take Things literally.

Thence it often happens, that for want of knowing what we ſay, we commend inſtead of blaming, and that our Elogies prove bitter Invectives. He that talks thus without knowing what he ſays, whether he praiſes or diſpraiſes, rather ſhews the Diſpoſition of his Heart than the Light of his Underſtanding; and we have ſometimes more Reaſon than we imagine, to attribute the Good or the Ill which People ſay of us, to the Goodneſs or Malice of thoſe who ſay it, rather than to their Knowledge; tho' they hit upon the truth. For really few Men underſtand either what is Good or what is Evil in it ſelf, and know nothing of it but what is ſuggeſted by the preſent Diſpoſition of their Hearts to which they aſcribe every thing A Man may ſometimes paſs for a *Great Wit*, who at another time ſhall be thought a *Sot*, if thoſe Perſons come to alter their Opinion who once thought him a *Wit*. We give way to the Paſſions and Motions of our Heart; but as for Truth, we ſuffer our ſelves to be led away from it by ſuch giddy Notions as make us unſteady, for want of making the juſt differences that fix and determine the Mind.

I ob-

I obſerve three different Sorts among thoſe we call, or that may be call'd *Stupid*. Some appear to be ſuch, but are ſo in reality; ſome ſeem to be ſuch and yet are not; others in ſome degree are *Stupid*, without appearing to be ſuch.

All the World agrees, that *Stupidity*, taking this Word in general, is nothing but a Courſeneſs and heavineſs of Mind. The natural Slowneſs of ſome Mens Actions and Diſcourſes makes them juſtly paſs for *Stupid*, and their Inſenſibility in moſt Things deſerves ſuch a Judgment to be paſs'd upon them. Enervated by the love of Eaſe, which their Laxineſs makes them ſo deſirous of, they fly from all Buſineſs; frighted by the Fear which their meanneſs of Spirit inſpires, they decline all Undertakings; and are as difficult to be mov'd, as they are apt to leave off when in Action.

They never penetrate into what one ſays nor conceive it without a great deal of trouble. Their mean Notions, attended by groſs and forc'd Expreſſions, baniſh them from all Commerce and humane Society. They never enter into Converſation but the Diſguſt they create in others, and the Diſtaſte they have of themſelves, ſoon bring them back to that obſcure Idleneſs they prefer before all Things.

A *Wit* is one that ſparkles in his Diſcourſe, and makes a mighty noiſe by the vivacity of his Imagination. Whereas the *Stupid*, being both Dull and Dumb, can neither ſpeak nor anſwer; his Brain with much ado receiving the weak Impreſſions of the heavy and puſillanimous Animal Spirits, produc'd in little quantity from a groſs thick Blood, which circulates but ſlowly and is, conſequently never refin'd enough. The ſeveral Ferments which the Viſcera prepare are more proper to coagulate, than thin it; and the Nerves being wholly fill'd with thoſe dull and weak Animal Spirits, want the juſt Bent which is neceſſary for them to ſerve as Organs to the Natural Senſe and Motions. Which Motions being conſequently but ſlack, the Impreſſions which the Soul receives from them are accordingly the weaker, the Deſigns ſhallower, the Genius poorer, and the Perſon more *Stupid*.

XXVI.

The ſecond Sort is of thoſe who ſeem to be *Stupid*, and are not. The Error which moſt Men lie under on their account is for the moſt part occaſion'd by their ſaying Little, or their talking Ill; by their being too ſilent, or uſing improper Expreſſions.

They

They who talk little and ſeldom do neither move nor delight the Hearers. They who expreſs themſelves ill, offend and trouble them. Neither the one nor the other inſpire agreeable Thoughts, or give any ſatisfaction; far therefore from paſſing for Men of Wit, they rather go for Blockheads amongſt certain People. Yet we may be miſtaken in it; for tho' Silence be ſometimes a mark of Stupidity, yet it may proceed from ſeveral other Cauſes. In * ſome 'tis a ſign of Timidity, in others a token of Modeſty, in ſome others an effect of Diſtruſt, and upon ſome Occaſions it is taken for an Evidence of Conviction. But very often 'tis neither Stupidity, nor Conviction, Diſtruſt, nor Modeſty; but rather Prudence and good Senſe, that obliges us to Silence, when we find that the good Things we would ſay will not be well reliſh'd, and thoſe we converſe with are not diſpos'd to receive them. For we ought not to uſe our Rhetoric at all times, and before all ſorts of Perſons.

Such a Silence is very judicious, and ſhows a great deal of Senſe in thoſe who forbear

* *Ulterius enim tacere, diffidentiæ ſignum eſt, non modeſtiæ ratio.*

talking

talking for that Reason. Their Eyes are their Orators; the Air or Gravity of their Countenance, which attends the wise management of their Words, does sufficiently discover the Solidity of their Thoughts; and is so much the juster reproach to our frothy superficial *Wits* that are not disposed to receive them, as this Air is grounded on a modest Discretion, not Insolence.

We are no less deceiv'd in the Judgment we make on those Men which pass for *Stupid*, or at least for People of indifferent Parts, because of the difficulty they lie under to express themselves. They have very often the same Thoughts a *Wit* may have on the same Subject; and all the Difference is, that a *Wit* utters them with Freedom and Ease, whereas the other does it but weakly and with trouble. The one rich in fine Terms, neither stops nor hesitates in Conversation; the other, poor in Expressions, but rich in Thoughts, confounds himself when he talks, and often is forced to give off. Yet if he does chance to utter his Notions, tho' with never so many blunders, we plainly see through the Confusion of his Words, what there is in his Thoughts; and that the good Things he thus express'd with Confusion, would have been Charming and excellent, if they had

had been deliver'd in polite neat Expreſſions.

Let us not deceive our ſelves; thoſe who talk ill are very often ſuch as have the beſt Thoughts. The Confuſion which appears in their Diſcourſe proceeds wholly from the juſtneſs of their Notions. They think too well, to diſcourſe ſo well, and are only perplex'd, becauſe they do not find the force of common Expreſſions comes up to the loftineſs of their Notions, theſe being too noble for their Expreſſions, or their Expreſſions too mean for their Notions. Their Want of Uniformity hinders their Coherence, and the ſearch they make after more noble Expreſſions, very often leads them from that plain natural Stile which is moſt pleaſing to the Mind. As they are confin'd within the bounds of a Language which to their Fancy is not full enough, 'tis impoſſible but their Diſcourſe muſt betray conſtraint. They are too ſolid in their Thoughts, and for that very Reaſon, too much crampt in their Expreſſions.

On the contrary the fine *Talkers* do not always utter the beſt Things. Their Ideas are very often as weak, as their Expreſſions are delicate; and this great facility of Expreſſion is ſometimes a ſenſible Sign of the poorneſs of their Genius. As they comprehend

prehend Little, and never dive into the bottom of Things, ſo they never want Words to expreſs their few Conceptions. They have more than is requiſite, and 'twere to be wiſh'd they were not ſo fluent; for as they have the Skill to make their Expreſſions eaſie and agreeable, ſo they make a falſe Eloquence their chief Buſineſs. They talk for the pure ſake of talking, and very often utter Things of no weight: Which is enough for them, becauſe their feeble Ideas are ſoon unravell'd; and there needs no great Efforts for ſo trifling a buſineſs. But a *Man of Judgment* cannot be ſatisfied with the emptineſs he finds under a fine Superficies. On the contrary he is often diſguſted, for not finding the good Things he in vain ſearch'd after under thoſe appearances.

If we judge of it by the Outſide only, we are apt to miſtake groſly in thoſe two Characters of *Wit*. The one is thought Sprightly, becauſe it eaſily diſcovers it ſelf, and under agreeable appearances, the other is condemn'd as *Stupid*, becauſe it cannot ſhew it ſelf with eaſe, and ſprightlineſs. But in the bottom this does not fall ſhort of the other; ſince a *Wit* of this Character may have at leaſt as ſtrong an Imagination, and perhaps more regular. His Brain is very

very likely of as good a Conſtitution, and his Animal Spirits have their requiſite Qualities in a ſufficient Quantity. But he has the misfortune not to be able to turn or diſpoſe thoſe Spirits towards thoſe Parts of the Brain where they ought to run to find the ſtrong Expreſſions he ſtands in need of. And, had he that Power, he would turn them perhaps to no purpoſe, becauſe the order of the Fibres of his Brain would be found ſo made in thoſe Parts, that the Spirits cannot make a free Paſſage, nor beat themſelves eaſie Paths. For which Reaſon when they are puſh'd and preſs'd, they are oblig'd, either to make ſome Effort to force the Obſtacles, or to turn and ſeek ſome other Paſſages. This puts all into diſorder, and cauſes a Confuſion, which ſeems to be in the Mind and Imagination, tho' in effect very often in the Words and Diſcourſe.

XXVIII.

If thoſe Perſons ſeem to be *Stupid* and are not ſo, there are others, without appearing to be ſo, come extreamly near it.

Theſe are not ſo ſilent as the others. They talk when they find an Opportunity, and alſo expreſs themſelves fluently and with eaſe; but whatever they ſay, or diſcourſe

courſe of, they only report what they have read or heard, and produce nothing of their own. They ſay nothing here but what they have heard elſewhere, and as they eaſily retain what they hear, they repeat a hundred times the ſame things, if they find as many Opportunities. They tire thoſe who have the Patience to hear them, and would be much concern'd ſhould they omit the leaſt Circumſtance. They deliver every Thing as they learn'd it, even the moſt frivolous and uſeleſs; as careful to remember Trifles, as incapable of remarking good Things.

We are ſeldom deceiv'd in them; for being tireſom and tedious 'tis impoſſible they ſhould be liſted among the *Wits*. To their good Memory they owe the Quality of *Stupid* by which they may be denominated, becauſe in Effect they are ſo in ſome degree, and make a Species of them.

An ancient *Grecian* has with Reaſon lookt upon an intire Defect of Memory to be a Sign of *Stupidity*. Had he but turn'd his Eyes on the oppoſite ſide, he would have perhaps remark'd, that there is alſo a kind of *Stupidity* which nearly follows too good a Memory. If ſome Men be ſo *Stupid* as to forget every Thing, there are others no leſs *Stupid*, for retaining all they read or hear

hear. If the Memory fails in thoſe, it is ſo full and ſo preſent to theſe, that it leaves them not the Liberty to think of what they ought, nor ſometimes of what they wou'd. Which may paſs under the Notion of *Stupidity.*

To make this clearer, I find my ſelf oblig'd to give my Sentiments on the Subject of Memory, and to ſpeak of its Effects and Uſes. Which will not be altogether incongruous, becauſe erroneouſly Men often give it the Title of *Wit*, tho' it has nothing which renders it worthy of that Honour.

XXIX.

Experience proves a good Memory and ſound Judgment to be almoſt inconſiſtent; and that thoſe who are ſo very happy in their Memory, are not very often ſo in their *Judgments.*

Reaſon alſo agrees with Experience in this, and will not ſuffer us to doubt of this Truth; for 'tis certain that to judge well; we muſt know the Thing we would judge of, that we muſt by conſequence examine it, ſee what is proper and ſuitable to it, and what is not, compare it with thoſe Things to which it may have ſome Relation, to diſcover in what it reſembles, and wherein it differs from them.

But

But to be capable of doing this, we must be in a Condition to perceive the Ideas which answer to the Things we examine. We must have a sufficient Capacity of Mind, to comprehend several Things at the same time; and not be encumber'd by others which have no relation to them. We must be able to turn and wind them on every side, and behold them in every Form. In a word, we ought to have the Mind Free, and the Judgment Sound. Now this Freedom of Mind and Soundness of Judgment, is not to be found in those who have so excellent and so good a Memory.

They have their Brain so dispos'd, as to receive profound Impressions of Things that please it; and those Impressions do not easily wear out. Their Animal Spirits are strong enough, and sufficiently agitated to make those Impressions; and their Constitution of Brain is proper to preserve them, when once made. These Spirits make themselves free Passages in the Brain, and pass very often without interrupting their Course. The very Impressions form'd by the Course of these Spirits are made in great Number in a very little time, so far from confounding each other, that on the contrary they join together with a kind of Order and a certain Disposition of Parts. Then,

by

by the Union of the Soul and the Body, which is as admirable as 'tis incomprehenſible, the Mind receives the Ideas of Things which anſwer to thoſe Impreſſions; it ſees, and is pleas'd with them. They even preſent themſelves to it in the ſame Order that the Impreſſions imprinted in the Brain preſerve. And, becauſe thoſe Impreſſions are deep and not eaſily raz'd out, and that the Animal Spirits may run into it ſeveral times without hindrance, the Ideas which anſwer to it ought alſo to return and preſent themſelves very often at ſeveral times. Herein we may make the Memory to conſiſt, which is eſteem'd ſo much the more happy, as it preſerves whatever is committed to it, and the more faithfully it repreſents it as Occaſion ſerves.

XXX.

But, if we conſider the narrow Bounds and ſmall Extent of our Underſtanding, how large ſoever our Vanity makes them, we may eaſily perceive, that a Man whoſe Brain freely receives ſtrong Impreſſions he a long time preſerves, is not really in a Condition to receive any of thoſe which are as ſoon effac'd as made, to make room for others ready to follow them, and which muſt alſo yield their Place to new ones when they

they come, to the end that the Mind attentive, as I have ſaid, to different Ideas, at the ſame time thoſe different Impreſſions are made, may ſee them as it were paſs by ſucceſſively, to know which it ought to join, and which it ought to ſeparate; or which is much the ſame Thing, to judge of them as well as of the Things they repreſent.

He will, I ſay, find it very difficult, if he has made ſome uſe of his Memory, to baniſh from his Mind a mighty Number of Ideas it crowds in upon him, to apply himſelf ſolely to thoſe he ought to conſider. There will always intervene either falſe or different ones from the Subject, that will go near to diſturb him, and which mixing unſeaſonably with the firſt, will break all his Deſigns, and take from him the Liberty of Judgment, by the Confuſion they'll occaſion in his Mind.

Does it not ſometimes happen, that a Word read or ſuggeſted, puts us upon a Diſcourſe we had utterly forgot? that we remember a proper Name difficult to recall, by only ſeeing the firſt Syllable? that one Feature of a Man's Face brings afreſh into our Minds another which reſembles it? 'tis but determining for that the Animal Spirits to ſome Motion; which of themſelves take that Courſe which is moſt eaſy unto them;

them; and ſo diſpoſe our Mind to follow them, and fix upon the Ideas they diſcover to it.

The ſame Thing happens to Men of too good a Memory, almoſt upon all Occaſions of Diſcourſe and Converſation. They have no ſooner caſt their Eyes upon one Thing, but their Memory repreſents to them another, which becauſe it has ſome Likeneſs with the firſt, is not however the Thing in queſtion; and not having at that inſtant the free Liberty of diſcerning, they ſuffer themſelves to be drawn whither the Animal Spirits take their unexpected Courſe. Which being more free and eaſy that way than any other, become ſo rapid, that in vain would they endeavour to retain them, ſhould they perceive their Error. Thus always interrupted and rambling, they never come to the Point. Their Judgments are falſe, and Arguments imperfect. Attention ſo neceſſary to all Men to inform themſelves of Things, and comprehend what they are, very often ſerves but to make them more obſcure, in diſpoſing their Minds to Error and Falſhood, and ſo leading their Thoughts from the Subject in hand.

For a Proof of my Aſſertion, I need no other Inſtance, but ſuch Men as have taken more Care to cultivate their Memories than their

their Minds. 'Tis very uſual with them when they talk, to fill their Converſation with Stories and Relations, which being pleaſantly turn'd engages the Minds of the Hearers, and makes them loſe the natural Connexion of the Diſcourſe, or ſo changes the Order of it, that it is no more the ſame. 'Tis in vain for one to expect they ſhould reſume the Thread of their Subject, who do not ſo much as think on't, becauſe, ſupported by their Memory, they have no ſooner finiſh'd one Story, but they endeavour to crowd in another, which immediately leads them to a third, if they find the Company in the leaſt diſpos'd to hear them. For thoſe Gentlemen have never done, and yet do not anſwer the Intent. But, if they ſeem to touch again at what was firſt propos'd, 'tis but *en paſſant*. As little able to Judge, as excellent at Reciting, they do not Argue, or elſe they Argue very ill; and amuſe you only with Tales and Abſurdities. This is that which I think I may call one Species of *Stupidity*, and to be really *Stupid* in ſome manner, without appearing to be ſo.

XXXI.

What hinders Men the moſt from ſeeing this Defect, is a certain Education too common

mon in the World, even amongſt thoſe who think themſelves the moſt Ingenious. They are more addicted to read than make Reflections, and particularly to read thoſe Books which pleaſe and delight more than Inſtruct. They form to themſelves a fine Idea of Knowledge and Learning, by endeavouring to read every Thing, and to retain all they read, but principally thoſe things which may ſerve to pleaſe or diſtinguiſh them in Company, as Poetry, Hiſtory, great Exploits, Genealogies, witty Jeſts, and the like, for in reality, thoſe Things infinitely pleaſe, and though very often they no not diſtinguiſh the uſeful from the uſeleſs part of them, provided they take a proper time to recite them, they may hope to gain the Minds of moſt Men, to prepoſſeſs them, and by this means obtain their Eſteem. So that if a natural Diſpoſition draws Men of good Memory into the aforeſaid Errors, the Pleaſure they find, and the Pride they take in them does not a little contribute to confirm 'em therein. And we are not ſurpris'd, that even thoſe who have not this Gift of Nature, endeavour to cultivate their Memory to the Prejudice of their Mind, and fill it with a vaſt Number of Facts heap'd the one upon the other, to uſe upon Occaſion to gain the Admiration

of

of thoſe who highly applaud a good Memory, and are delighted with Narrations.

I do not here examine whence it happens, that we are more willing to hear thoſe who relate a Story, than thoſe who argue or diſcuſs a Point, and that our converſation runs moſt upon Recitals. But I well know that by this very Thing Men of good Memories are diſtinguiſh'd, and that they ſet too great a Value upon themſelves for it. They diſcourſe when others are oblig'd to be ſilent; and all the Company turns and liſtens to them. They are the only Men taken notice of; 'tis not civil to interrupt 'em, but a ſign of Folly and Levity not to be attentive; and we conſtantly extol and praiſe them. How can they chooſe but be pleas'd? and why ſhould not others endeavour to excell the ſame way? They gain the Hearts and Minds, and are reckon'd ingenious Men, in ſpight of good Senſe, as alſo of thoſe who have a greater Eſteem for it than Memory. 'Tis ſuch an Allurement to the intirely cheriſhing of this, and abandoning the other, that they render themſelves incapable of making a right Uſe of it.

A good Memory, I muſt confeſs, is a mighty Help, and ſuch as deſerves to be rank'd amongſt the good Qualifications of an

an ingenious Man. There are a Thouſand Occaſions where we can do nothing without it; it being not only advantageous to us; but alſo abſolutely neceſſary. The Miſchief is, that we can ſcarce enjoy this Quality, but we in ſome manner neglect the *Judgment*, which is, much more preferable. Let Men then if they pleaſe ſtudy the Perfection of their Memory, I conſent to it, provided they take more care of their Minds; let 'em exerciſe that, provided they make more uſe of this. Happy are they who have a juſt regard both for the one and the other. But, by way of Caution, if one minds it well, 'tis infinitely better to render one's ſelf capable of judging, than remembring well; and I hold it for a certain Maxim, that good Senſe may in ſome Occaſions ſupply the want of Memory; whereas the extraordinary Talent of Remembring cannot on any Occaſion ſupply the want of good Senſe.

XXXII.

Imagination, as I have made it appear, is not that which makes a *Man* of *Judgment*. 'Tis plain Memory does it leſs. We then unjuſtly give them that fine Title, and 'tis in vain the *Wit* extols and glorifies its ſelf for the ſame, for ſince all the pretended Ex-

cellency of his Genius consists wholly in these two Faculties, he ought to confine himself there, and not attribute to himself what belongs not to him, nor give himself out for what he is not. Yet we must allow this to most Men's Shame, that if a *Wit* deceives and imposes on us in Conversation, 'tis as much occasion'd by the Prepossession of the Hearers, as by the Talent of the Speaker, who being flatter'd (as has been already observ'd) with a secret Pride, as the Hearers are drawn away by a sensible Pleasure, are both mistaken, tho' they touch one another unseen. They wish for one another's Company, and none are more joyful than they when together, because of the Pleasure they reciprocally afford to each other, not for any Light or Instructions they communicate.

I do not pretend by this to change familiar Discourses and common Conversation into Philosophical Conferences, or Schools of Learning. Any thing that savours of Instruction is offensive in Conversation, and nothing appears so insupportable in it as the Liberty some People take of prescribing Rules to all the World. I pity such as fall under the hands of Men, who with the Air of a School-Master will undertake to teach them. We must break off, and fly

fly the Converſation of thoſe who Dogmatize on every Thing; ſuch a Domineering Method being apt to make the Mind rebell. But, I am forc'd to ſay it, there is not a leſs Inconvenience in the other Extream, and I believe that if we would enjoy the Pleaſure of Converſation as delicate *Wits*, we ſhould alſo take an Advantage of it as reaſonable *Men*.

There is nothing in my Opinion, that ſpoils ſo much the Judgment of a Gentleman, as his delighting too much in a falſe Delicacy. 'Tis nouriſhing one's ſelf with Meats of little Subſtance; and how agreeable ſoever they may be to the Palate, they are certainly too light for Uſe. That which pleaſes moſt the Mind, is not what contributes the moſt to the inſtructing it. We ought to diſtruſt thoſe who ſupply and fill up Converſation with ſo much Vivacity and Fineneſs, and ought to dread the falling into ſuch nice Company as much as Mariners do Rocks. If I did not know how eaſy it were to diſcover the *wretched Emptineſs and Vanity* of ſuch Converſation, I would farther enlarge my ſelf upon it to give you an exact Deſcription of it. But its Faults being daily expos'd to the Eyes of all the World, I ſhall not inſiſt upon ſhewing what is but too much in ſight. 'Twill

ſuffice for the Concluſion of this Part, to remark two or three of thoſe principal Defects, being as it were the Fountain of all others, and the moſt common to *our Wits*.

XXXIII.

The Freedom of Converſation does not exclude Bounds and Rules. 'Tis a Commerce of Thoughts and Words; and a good Order and Method is as neceſſary to carry on that Commerce as any other; we ought to receive and return it with ſome ſort of Harmony. But a *Wit*, who is as ready to judge as to diſcourſe, decides immediately every Thing, and anſwers before he has well heard what was ſaid. His Vivacity tranſports him; and by the very firſt Advances he makes, we may perceive he's going too faſt. Thus Converſation becomes a Club of Noiſe and Chattering, where Men talk a great deal, and ſay little to the purpoſe.

In the ſecond place, the juſt diſtruſt modeſt Men have of their Notions, makes them conſider 'em before hand, after which they utter thoſe they think moſt reaſonable, and keep the others to themſelves. Such Men offer nothing raſhly. But a *Wit*, full of himſelf, and a great Admirer of his own Opinions,

Opinions, cannot forbear uttering all he knows, and talking of every Thing. This Itch of talking proceeds for the moſt part from an inſatiable Deſire of having People ſpeak advantageouſly of him; and the Ambition of being eſteem'd, which would not be perhaps an Imperfection in another, is really ſo in him, becauſe he is immoderate, and his Pride is the Occaſion of it.

In the third place, a Man who is a Maſter of *Wit* never boaſts much of it; but is rather for valuing that of other Men, and wiſely knowing that we do not love to be out-done; but principally in ingenuity and Wit, if he finds he has any Advantage over others, he modeſtly hides their want of it. A *Wit* is ignorant of thoſe Maxims, or cannot make uſe of them. He will engroſs *Wit* to himſelf, and earneſtly wiſhes that all other Men were *Fools*; and as in his Temper he is apt to ſcorn and deride others, ſo he ſlights every Thing which is not the Product of his own Brain.

In ſhort, every Thing, and Converſation among the reſt, ought to have its juſt Limits. We are to live, not to be always together. As too long a Retirement dulls the Spirits, ſo too frequent a keeping of Company is apt to diſſipate 'em; and the moſt ſolid Mind may be weakned by either

of them. By the one it becomes like those heavy Bodies which have no Strength or Vigour, for want of Exercise; and by the other, like those that are wasted and spent, for want of Rest. But a *Wit* flies at all, and takes as much Pains to shew himself as the *Stupid* does to conceal himself. Always wandring, unsetled, and forward to appear, he bestows himself upon all sorts of Men, because he can't enjoy himself. Happy if content with himself, as much as many others are with him, he had not the Conversation of certain cold and reserv'd Men to fear, who neither make too much haste, nor perplex themselves, but always give themselves the leisure to examine Things by Reason, rather than be surpris'd and seduc'd by the Senses.

PART

PART II.

Of WIT *in* BOOKS.

I.

ALL Witty Compoſitions may be reduc'd to the Three following Heads, *viz. Poetry*, *Oratory*, or *Hiſtory*. For I ſuppoſe a Man of *Wit* deſigns to paſs either for a *Poet*, an *Orator*, or an *Hiſtorian*.

If he's a *Poet*, and has a happy Talent in that ſort of *Poetry* he pretends to, I know nothing that ſooner gains him the Character he ſo much affects, I mean that of *Wit*, that recommends and ſets him off to more Advantage, than this ſingle Qualification. A few *Stanzas*, an *Ode*, or a *Poem*, made and approv'd of by certain Perſons, at a happy juncture, and in ſome certain Circumſtances, have ſeldom fail'd to intitle him to the Name of a *Wit*, to diſtinguiſh him from the common Herd, and to procure him an honourable Place among the *Wits* in ſome famous *Academies*.

Poetry has wonderful Charms, and of all the different Branches of *Wit*, that of a good *Poet* is the moſt agreeable, and moſt taking: For which Reaſon I readily own it better deſerves this Name than any other *Quality*; and I may venture once more to affirm it after I have told my Reader what I underſtand by that *Term*.

If we reſpect only the Senſes, and their Pleaſures, the Imagination, and its Charms, the Paſſions and their Motions; a good *Poet*, I confeſs, is really ineſtimable; becauſe amongſt the other Pleaſures of the Mind, the Talent of *Poetry* is the moſt exquiſite, eſpecially to Perſons of a delicate Fancy.

But if we will guide our ſelves by our Reaſon and its Deciſions, this Quality becomes on a ſudden contemptible; the pretended Charms and Excellencies of a *Poets* Wit being like thoſe dull heavy Beauties we look on with Indifference.

II.

Before we determine any Thing in this Matter, we muſt firſt conſider, whether we mean to examine the Thing in it ſelf, or in Relation to our ſelves, whether we deſign our Pleaſure, or Truth. After which we may take which ſide we pleaſe, either that of

of Imagination or Reaſon, the Senſes or the Mind, which are Things altogether oppoſite. We ought to leave Imagination to the *Poets* and their *Favourers*. Let us allow their Fancy to be never ſo Lively, Vaſt and Charming to a Wonder, they may paſs for *Wits* indeed; but how can the greateſt Part of them pretend to the Character of *Men of Judgment*, who reaſon weakly, and whoſe Knowledge is narrow and ſcanty? By conſequence they are not ſo worthy as we think them of the Admiration of rational Men, nor of the eſteem of the Learned.

I ſay the greateſt part of them, for the Rule is not without Exception. I know ſome who are ſo happy as to join the Delicacy of Fancy with an excellent *Judgment*, the Solid with the Agreeable. But I ſpeak in general, the Mind in *Poetry* wanders and roves, and a *ſolid Judgment* can hardly reconcile it ſelf to the Liberties of *Poetry*.

There is nothing comparable to the Trouble a warm'd Imagination occaſions in a *Poets* Mind? nothing can equal the Confuſion caus'd in it by the delicate Pleaſure he feels and makes others ſenſible of.

When a *Poet* has for ſome time ſtrain'd himſelf to bring forth excellent Notions upon his Subject in hand; when he has

often put his thoughts upon the Rack, to find a proper Expreſſion or a Rhyme; if he will but reflect on the Impreſſions which are form'd in his Brain, and the Images they repreſent, where is then the Liberty of his Mind? and what Uſe can he make of it? If he meditates, he creeps; if he examines, he falls. He muſt neceſſarily abandon himſelf wholly to his Imagination, and its Flights; he muſt puſh it forward, and follow it cloſe. For, the more it is heated, the loftier the Thoughts ſeem to be, the more it is kept up, the nobler are the Expreſſions.

——*Sectantem levia, nervi*
Deficiunt, animique; profeſſus grandia, turget;
Serpit humi, tutus nimium, timiduſq; procelſæ.

We muſt then ſubdue our Reaſon, if Imagination muſt rule; weaken the one, to fortifie the other; for we cannot put them in the ſame Degree, nor place them in the ſame Rank.

III.

t being the principal buſineſs of a *Poet* aint well, and make lively Images of it he conceives, he muſt be as much, if more, imploy'd in the ſearch of Words, their Meaſure, than the nature of ngs. The ſtronger the Expreſſion is, the

the more lively and agreeable is the Impreſſion it makes. He muſt therefore ſtrain himſelf to humour a ſtrong Imagination rather than conſult juſt and good Reaſon, and rather aim at lively Repreſentations, than right and ſolid Judgment.

'Tis the Property of the Mind to inſtruct and inlighten, and of the Imagination to touch and delight; as that of the Paſſions to move. If a *Poet* does not pleaſe, he's inſipid; if he does not move, he's cold. He muſt therefore be touch'd firſt himſelf, and mov'd by the very Paſſion he wou'd excite. Paſſions are commonly mov'd by Paſſions, and Motions caus'd by the like Motions. We then ought to conſider a *Poet* mov'd, touch'd, and troubl'd as many ways as he has Sentiments to expreſs, and Motions to follow; and by a neceſſary Conſequence, always depriv'd of that Force and Liberty, in which alone the Exactneſs and Perfection of his Mind conſiſts.

Far from preſerving his Own, he muſt deprive others of theirs, to pleaſe them and make himſelf admir'd. It is not allowable in a *Poet* to be indifferent. He muſt either Charm, or Diſguſt, Excel, or Creep; there is no *Medium*. I believe it proceeds from this, that a *Poet* who means to gain

Ap-

Applauſe, ought not to give his Mind leiſure to know it ſelf, nor his Reaſon the time to examine. Verſes ought to move, and raviſh, every time we read or hear them read. If they do not, but leave our Minds free, Reaſon will ſoon enter, which for the moſt part not finding any thing in them worthy its Conſideration, deſpiſes the Terms, and laughs at their fine Order and Gingling. The Imagination finds not its ſatisfaction in them, Reaſon much leſs. Thus every Thing languiſhes, and the *Poet* is cry'd down.

Non ſatis eſt Pulchra eſſe poemata, dulcia ſunto;
Et quocunq; volent animum Auditoris agunto.

Not but Men may ſo write, that Reaſon may have as great a Share as Imagination, and that the Readers may find wherewithall to exerciſe the one, as well as ſatisfie the other. There are Men of that excellent Genius, who at the ſame time Pleaſe and Inſtruct, move and Inlighten; but this is ſo extraordinary, and 'tis ſo difficult to keep s Order, that a *Poet* finds it more his Advantage to overthrow it, in giving a free ſcope to Imagination, and little to Reaſon.

It

It ought, generally ſpeaking, to be with Verſes, as with the Beams of the Sun, which we cannot ſtedfaſtly look on without being dazzled by them. The number of paſſionate is much greater than that of moderate Men, and a *Poet* who has the Secret to move, and to inſpire great Thoughts, ſhall always paſs for a good *Poet*. But if he be not ſo to all the World, 'tis becauſe the Diſpoſitions of the Brain in all Men are not the ſame, and that their Minds are not equally affected with the ſame Things. In thoſe Things which depend ſolely on good Senſe, 'tis purely Want of Underſtanding which makes that diſpleaſe one Man which is approved by another. But in what depends on Imagination, if Men do not agree, 'tis becauſe ſome have a fainter, or a different Reliſh of Things, than others. Reaſon is always One, and Pure; but the Senſes are almoſt every where Different.

IV.

Thoſe who only write to move the Paſſions, how agreeable ſoever their Performance be, muſt not expect to be approv'd of by all the World; not even by thoſe who wholly judge by their Paſſions. We have a great Inſtance of it in the Judgments

ments pass'd upon two great *Poets* of our Time.

The Age is so Fantastical, that Men who reject all manner of Rules, only to apply themselves to what pleases and flatters their Imagination, have sometimes despis'd *Racine*, as delicate, and as insinuating a *Poet* as he is, and cannot enough esteem *Corneille* who commands and instructs them: Men that flie from every Thing that requires Approbation, that cannot relish a moral and imperious Character both together, who cannot suffer before their Eyes Examples they cannot follow, nor Actions they cannot imitate, are the first to prefer the Works of *Corneille*, before those of *Racine*: Tho' the Character of the last is most natural, exposing only the Idea of Motions we our selves follow, and see followed by others; setting before our Eyes those Actions we find our selves capable of, and to which we are naturally inclin'd. We also see *Corneille* crown'd with Lawrels by those who are angry and disgusted with the least Fault in the Language; who love only that which delicately moves, whilst they can scarcely say one favourable Word of *Racine*, who is rich in his Thoughts, correct in his Expressions, and who Flatters and Pleases.

But

But if we consider, that the Passions, which are the same in all Men, are not of the same Force in all; that there are governing and predominant Passions, which however do not always Rule and upon all Occasions in the Hearts of those they possess; that there are others which for a time usurp their Place, which inspire new Sentiments, and give another Prospect of Things; we shall not be astonish'd that those who now are Charm'd with that which Tickles and Flatters, at another Time are only touch'd by that which surprises. The Passion for the Sublime, and Noble Stile, prevails then over the Moving and Pathetical. The Soft and Tender Expressions yield to the Sublime and Lofty, till on some other Occasion it resumes its first Place, and makes way for its opposite Sentiments.

The Spirit of Grandeur in most of the Works of *Corneille*, makes a far deeper Impression on some Men when dispos'd for it, than the Tenderness which is inspir'd in them by the Writings of *Racine*; and on the contrary in the Minds of a great many others, or indeed of themselves at another Time, the Flattering and Tender Stile of *Racine*, shall be infinitely esteem'd before the Loftiness of *Corneille*.

All

All Men are of a different Temper; and the Temperament in each Man is not always the ſame as to every Thing. The Blood and the Spirits are diſpos'd in ſome otherwiſe than in others, and receive great Changes in every particular Man. They are more or leſs Cold or Hot, according as they are fixed or agitated by their ſeveral Ferments. The Courſe of the Spirits is not always equal in the Brain, and goes not with the ſame Force; thence it happens that in Things which depend on the Imagination, one is for the Sublime, another for the Delicate and Charming; ſome delight in that which raiſes the Mind, others in that which moves; and if the delicate Fancy of theſe is charm'd with the Writings of *Racine*, the Pride of the others finds its Satisfaction in the Writings of *Corneille*. The truth is, if we will give a rational Judgment, we muſt own there is a great deal of Softneſs and Paſſion in *Corneille* upon ſeveral Occaſions, as well as of the Great and Sublime in *Racine*, and that they are two excellent Men in their ſeveral Ways of Writing.

V. If

V.

If to avoid the *Medium* ſo fatal to *Poets*, it is often convenient for them to ſurpriſe by their Sublimity, it does not leſs concern them to allure by Pleaſure. They muſt either Dazle or Pleaſe, two dangerous Rocks, againſt which moſt *Poets* are Wreck'd. The Danger is ſo much the greater; becauſe it is not ſufficient for a *Poet* to write fine or pretty Things; but he muſt alſo meet with Men diſpos'd to reliſh them. The difficult Point therefore of a *Poet*, is to find the moſt natural Way to quicken the Fancy, and the Art chiefly conſiſts, in my Opinion, in the choice, in the harmony and juſt meaſures he obſerves, in the moſt exact, convenient, and natural Cadence of his Verſes, in Reference to thoſe who read them, and to the Subject he treats of. We often find that only by a handſom and noble, but principally a new Turn of Expreſſion, a *Poet* pleaſes, and makes himſelf eſteem'd.

Dixeris egregie, notum ſi callida verbum
Reddiderit junctura novum.

Few Men penetrate any farther, beings as it were inchanted by the peculiar Order and

and Placing of the Words, the happy Choice of the Rhymes, and a Concord of Sounds and Words which make a kind of Harmony.

The Reaſon is, becauſe there is a certain Proportion which agrees with the Imagination in thoſe Things that depend on it, as we find there is one which pleaſes the Senſes in ſenſible Objects. As the Ear is pleas'd with an Harmony of Sounds, the Taſte with a certain ſeaſoning of Meat well dreſs'd, and the Sight with a certain diverſity of Colours well ſorted and matched; ſo we find in Things well imagin'd, and in juſt Expreſſions, a certain Turn, a certain Meaſure, a certain Congruity which pleaſes, and makes us own the *Poet* happy in his Thoughts. If this Proportion be not exactly juſt, if there be the leaſt Defect, it offends. Some Things there are which cannot properly be introduced into ſome Subjects, and therefore 'tis abſurd to crowd them there, while others come naturally and proper to the Subject.

We may eaſily perceive thoſe differences, without being able to determine either in what they conſiſt, or from whence they proceed; becauſe judging of them only by the Senſes or the Imagination. We cannot know what Things are but as they relate

relate to our ſelves. If they are Good or Evil, that is to ſay, if they pleaſe or diſpleaſe us, for 'tis the Pleaſure or the Pain they create in us, which makes us paſs our Verdict accordingly.

This Pleaſure whether it proceeds from the Senſes, or the Imagination, is often produc'd by a certain Conformity between Us and the Objects. Which Conformity makes us admire and reliſh them, as their Diſproportion offends and makes us hate them.

According as thoſe Conformities are more or leſs juſt, the Pleaſures are more or leſs great; which is another Reaſon that amongſt the Things we reliſh, we like ſome better than others, what we love at one time we ſlight at another, and what pleaſes one day may diſpleaſe us the next.

An excellent *Poet* of old *Rome* was not ignorant of what importance it was, to make his Verſes acceptable, to nick the Time wherein there would be moſt Conformity between his Epigrams, and the Diſpoſition of the Mind of him to whom he addreſs'd Them, when he ſaid,

Hora libellorum decima eſt, Eupheme, meorum,
Temperat ambroſiæ cum tua cura dapes,
Et bonus ætherео laxatur nectare Cæſar.

He

He thought it the beſt Time for his Verſes to be read, when the Imagination of the Prince warm'd with Wine, and diſpoſing him to Pleaſure and Mirth, put ſome Proportion between his jovial Humour, and the *Poets* Wit and Gayety. On the contrary his Muſe durſt not, ſaid he, appear in a free and ſedate Time, when the Prince poſſeſs'd with ſolid Thoughts, was of a much colder Temper; becauſe his Gravity and Seriouſneſs would not be pleas'd with his Wit and Jeſting.

——— *Greſſu timet ire licenti*
Ad matutinum noſtra Thalia Jovem:

Nothing ſo much proves the Truth of what I have ſaid, as the Sentiments that almoſt all the World has of Verſes and *Poets*. We do not like them but when the Meaſure, the Choice of Words, the Harmony of Rhymes, the natural Connexion of the Verſes and their particular Order, the Turn of Expreſſion, and the Proportion well obſerv'd in all thoſe Things, flatter our Imagination, and raiſe our Fancy, by the preſent Conformity they have with us.

If thoſe Proportions are not well obſerv'd, if the Expreſſions are mean, the Style perplex'd, the Meaſures falſe, they produce nothing

nothing but a Diſſonance, which diſpleaſes and tires us by its Diſproportion.

VI.

With the good leave of our *Poets*, the whole Secret of their Art conſiſts in finding Terms, and ranging them in good Order.

——— *Niſi quod pede certo*
Differt Sermoni, Sermo merus.

'Tis moſt commonly the only Thing that diſtinguiſhes them. The Beauty of their Thoughts vaniſhes, almoſt as ſoon as you ſtrip them of the Beauty of their Expreſſions. Let us take one of the fineſt Places of any *Poet*, which we have been the moſt charm'd with, and turn it into another Language, or into the ſame in other Terms; that very Place ſhall immediately loſe its Excellency, and very often becomes Mean and Dull,

——— *Eripias ſi*
Tempora certa, modoſq; & quod prius ordine verbum eſt
Poſterius facias, præponens ultima primis.

By which we ſee that Imagination has a greater ſhare in *Poetry* than the Mind; that 'tis Imagination that forms the noble Talent of a *Poet*, and which alone makes that Sort of *Wits*.

Not

Not that I deſign abſolutely to exclaim againſt all ſorts of *Poetry*, or declare my ſelf a ſworn Enemy of the *Poets*. I muſt own it, I eſteem their Talent, and ſet a Value on their fine Verſes. I am, like others, pleas'd with them, but they muſt pardon me if I cannot acknowledge them to be what they are not, nor eſteem them more than they really deſerve.

There are two ſorts of Men who are always oppoſing each other; thoſe who aim at Niceneſs and Delicacy, and thoſe who affect Soundneſs of Reaſon. The former laugh at the latter for their Pedantry, and theſe ſcorn the others for their want of ſolid Judgment. Neither of 'em are much to blame; for Delicacy ought to be ſupported by Solidity, and this ought to be adorn'd with Delicacy. Without this Temperament, the one ſeems Light and Ridiculous, and the other Wild and Enthuſiaſtick.

This Diſpute is chiefly carried on between the *Philoſophers* and *Poets*. The *Philoſopher* in the *Poet*'s Opinion is nothing but a dreaming Dotard, and the *Philoſopher* thinks the *Poet* an airy Coxcomb. To put an end to this Controverſy, the *Philoſopher* ſhould be more Poliſh'd, and the *Poet* more Solid.

'Tis

'Tis unreaſonable to think, that a great Capacity and ſound Judgment is the only Qualification that is requir'd in ſolid and ſerious Works; and that a neat Invention, and Delicacy will ſuffice in thoſe that are fine and agreeable. For both the one and the other would be exceedingly better and of greater worth, if Reaſon and Politeneſs govern'd equally in them both; and if we would endeavour to be Witty, without being leſs Rational, or follow good Senſe, without being leſs Polite.

VII.

What I have ſaid of a *Wit* who values himſelf for his *Poetry*, I may almoſt ſay of him who pretends to diſtinguiſh himſelf by his *Eloquence*. Their Talents are vey different; yet they have this common to them both; that *True Wit* has ſcarce any ſhare in their Productions. 'Tis only another Turn of Imagination, which diſtinguiſhes the *Orator* from the *Poet*; 'tis another Manner of Surprizing, and Moving, which are the two principal Ends of a *Wit*, Whatever Talent he has to Compaſs them.

As the Deſign of a *Poet* is to repreſent Things well, and to turn his Conceptions into lively and ſenſibly Images in his Verſe; ſo all the Skill of an *Orator* conſiſts in giving you

you fine Draughts of his Imagination in his *Eloquence*. But as neither of them can draw (if I may uſe that Expreſſion) but after the Images and Expreſſions ingrav'd in their Brain, and which properly they do but Copy; they muſt of neceſſity ſtrongly apply their Minds to thoſe Images and inceſſantly look on them; always inſlav'd to their Imaginations, as well as guilty of all the Violence they commit on Reaſon, and all the Diſorder they cauſe in the Mind. For if once they take their Imagination for their Guide, they muſt abſolutely follow it, and reſolve at the ſame time to fall into all its Errors.

For this Reaſon we muſt not think it ſtrange, if their Paintings, (otherwiſe very fine) are in reality ſo little Natural, and if thoſe we call *Wits* palm falſe and counterfeit Thoughts upon us. They ſcarcely ſee any thing but through thick Clouds rais'd by their over-heated Imaginations in their Minds; that is, by the Impreſſions the Animal Spirits which are ſubtil and agitated ingrave in their Brain; as I have already explain'd it in Conformity to the Nature of the Fibres, the Diſpoſition of the Blood, and Quality of the Ferments which mix with them.

VIII. There

VIII.

There are two ſorts of *Eloquence*, a True, and a Falſe one; and there are two ſorts of *Genius* which put them both in Practice. Some apply themſelves as much, if not more, to the Knowledge of the Matter they are to ſpeak of, than to the Manner; and uſe all their Skill to manage well their Subject rather than Imbelliſh it. Others never penetrate into their Subject, but make it their whole Buſineſs to find out the manner and means of rendring it agreeable; theſe labour rather to adorn than dive into it, and take leſs care to diſcover what it is, than to diſguiſe it by making it appear what it is not.

We may eaſily diſcover the difference of thoſe ſorts of *Eloquence*, if we will but conſider their principal Ends. True *Eloquence* has three, *viz.* to Inſtruct, Pleaſe, and Perſuade; as a famous *Orator* handſomely expreſſes it. *Ut Veritas pateat, ut Veritas placeat, ut Veritas moveat.* Falſe *Eloquence* has alſo three Ends, *viz.* to Dazle, to Touch, and Surprize. They abſolutely differ, both in their Ends and Ways. For tho' both may very often equally Pleaſe and Perſuade, there is yet this Difference between them, that one is for the Pleaſure of the

Senſes and Imagination, and the other for the Pleaſure of the Mind. One perſuades by Reaſon, the other by Impreſſion. And becauſe neither of 'em can attain their Ends but by aſſiduouſly applying themſelves to fine Imaginations, and noble Deſcriptions; to do it effectually, the one muſt firſt bring forth the Products of Imagination with the Conceptions of the Mind, and compare the Images engraven in the Brain with the clear Ideas of the Mind; whereas the other ſubmits all to the Information of the Senſes, and judges as Fancy leads him.

IX.

Let us now ſee if true *Eloquence*, ſuch as it ought to be in its natural Purity, whoſe Source is the Light of the Mind, and which takes only from a well regulated Imagination thoſe Helps that are neceſſary to produce this Light, can be the part of a *Wit*.

To ſolve this Doubt, we need only reflect upon the Works of ſeveral Men, either printed or ſpoken, even of thoſe, who, by I know not what good Fortune have gain'd the Admiration of the World. What fine Words! What Phraſes! What Antitheſes! What Flights! What Fire do we not find in their *Orations!* But, if we do but ſeriouſly penetrate into the Bottom of them, we ſhall find

find it all to be but Emptineſs *. I ſhould never have done, if I here were minded to recite all the particular Examples of this falſe *Eloquence*, our Libraries would furniſh me with Volumes full of 'em. But a few Reflections will ſerve to remark the Faults committed by theſe *VVits* in their Pieces of *Oratory*, by which they propos'd to raiſe their Reputation in the World.

When we ſay ſuch a Man is a Man of *Eloquence*, we mean one who produces juſt Notions on the Subject he treats of; who finds proper and genuine Reaſons for what he ſays; and who has the Art and Talent to explain them in a lively, but pure and clear manner to others. For after all, a Diſcourſe has no true Ornaments, but ſuch as are extracted from the Juſtneſs of the Thoughts that compoſe it, from the Soundneſs of the Reaſons that ſupport it, and from the natural Manner of turning it.

Thus we baniſh from true *Oratory* thoſe vain Imbelliſhments which diſfigure it; ſuch as rambling and general Notions, weak and ſcatter'd Reaſons, uſeleſs Digreſſions, ſtrain'd Figures, and forc'd Compariſons;

* *Multa ſine ſenſu dicta, ut expleatur circuitus: Curamus ut numerus conſtet, non curamus ut ſenſus.*

in a Word, all thoſe Frothy Speeches full of nothing but Words, and little to the Purpoſe. *A Man of VVit* ſeems to me the moſt ſubject to fall into all theſe Errors and Extravagancies, as well in reſpect of his Stile as Thoughts, the two principal Things which ought to fix our Judgment either in reading, or hearing.

As among thoſe who pretend to write, either in *Proſe* or *Verſe*, a *Wit* is one that makes the greateſt Efforts to ſhew and diſtinguiſh himſelf by his Stile; ſo the Ambition he has to write ſomething extraordinary makes him fall into two inevitable Errors, common to all vain and preſumptuous *Authors*, *viz.* Meanneſs and Confuſion. Nicety, and too trifling a Delicacy, inſenſibly entangles him in the firſt; and the Sublime, or Admirable he affects, leads him into the other, according as his Imagination more or leſs hurries him to be Sublime or delicate, and he can never expreſs himſelf in a noble Stile, without ſwelling, and in a Delicate without too much Nicety.

X.

If the Works of a *VVitty Man* want the Graces of Plainneſs and Clearneſs of Style, we will find much leſs Truth and Inſtruction in his Sentiments. He

He that will not reflect on the Natural Knowledge which our Mind diſcovers as it were within it ſelf, whenever he will ſeriouſly fix upon it; that will not dive again into the firſt Principles, and thoſe great and firſt Truths on which depends the Certainty of all the reſt; and who will not bring back again to them that Chain of Reflections Cuſtom obliges us to make; ſuch a Man can never know any Truths with Aſſurance, even of thoſe that are commonly receiv'd. He ſhall neither be well convinc'd, nor ſtrongly perſuaded of any Thing, not even of that which he believes he knows the beſt; becauſe he only believes it but by Prepoſſeſſion; without any other Foundation than what he builds on weak Conjectures, on the Authority of others, or the Opinion of the World.

We ought not therefore to expect any Thing excellent from an *Author*, but in proportion as he is capable of making Reflections. Now I'll leave you to judge if a giddy fickle Imagination, and a falſe Delicacy ever give a *Wit* the leiſure to make any ſerious Reflections.

Nevertheleſs he is applauded, and eſteem'd by moſt Men, tho' Clearneſs, the chief Beauty of any Diſcourſe (as a great *Orator* tells us) is ſeldom ſeen in his Works,

and altho' he amuſes us either with unintelligible Stuff or falſe Reaſoning, becauſe we are commonly ſuch Fools as to be pleaſed with it. Thoſe pretended fine Things we find in them, the more Obſcure they are, the more Beautiful they appear; they fill the Imagination, or pleaſe the Mind; which is the Reaſon that we either Admire, or Love them.

XI.

By the Admiration which ariſes from the Impreſſion made in the Brain by ſomething which appears very Extraordinary, or from the Surpriſe it produces in the Soul, the Animal Spirits diſpers'd in the Nerves, move with greater ſwiftneſs, ſo that Part of the Brain where the Impreſſion has been made. They augment and preſerve it, as long as their Motion laſts, and the Cauſe that produc'd it; keeping by Conſequence the Soul as it were in Suſpence, ſo that it cannot in that Interval apply it ſelf to any Thing elſe.

The ſame Effect is alſo wrought on a great many Men by thoſe choice Expreſſions, fine Figures, pompous Deſcriptions, and bold Characters, which fill and adorn thoſe eloquent *Orations* ſo much boaſted of, and of which one may ſay what an

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Ancient *Writer* ſaid on the ſame Subject, *Plus ſonant quam valent*; becauſe in effect, they impoſe upon us by the confus'd Noiſe they make. 'Tis impoſſible but the falſe glittering that reigns in thoſe Diſcourſes muſt fill the Imagination of thoſe who read or hear them, by communicating a Motion to the Animal Spirits, proper to make an unexpected Impreſſion in their Brain, and by this means ſurpriſe the Soul. Which continues affected with the ſurpriſe till the Motion of the Animal Spirits being weakned, the Impreſſion wears off, or is not ſo freſh; and then the Soul returns from its Surpriſe as it were from a Dream.

By the Approbation which proceeds from the Impreſſion made on the Senſes by Things that ſeem Pleaſant, and the ſweet Commotion they cauſe in the Soul, the Animal Spirits delicately agitated equally ſpread themſelves in the Brain, and the reſt of the Body, and put into a Diſpoſition proper to produce Sentiments that flatter and pleaſe the Soul, and which intice it towards thoſe Objects that caus'd the Impreſſion.

The ſame Effect is made on the Minds of *beau Monde*, who are always more Senſible than Reaſonable, by that vain ſubtility of Thoughts, that we ſet out with the name of Delicacy, that Contexture of fine Tern

that Exquiſite Mixture of Figures, that Turn of Expreſſion which ſeems Natural, but is not, that Meaſure of Phraſes accompani'd with a certain Tone of the Voice; which makes a kind of Harmony that tickles the Ear; in one word, all thoſe falſe Flouriſhes we remark in the beſt receiv'd Writings, and which prepoſſeſs the World in favour of their *Author*. But when the Impreſſion is once worn out, the Commotion of the Soul ceaſes, and that pretended Beauty of Diſcourſe vaniſhes with the prepoſſeſſing Pleaſure from whence it had its Original.

Now this is the whole Compaſs of a *Wit*'s Talent, let him write in *Verſe* or *Proſe*, to Dazle by falſe Glittering, or Prepoſſeſs by Pleaſure; without ſuffering the Light of the Mind or Reaſon to have any ſhare in it. Thoſe Writings are like certain Women, who pleaſe, tho' not handſome, by ſomething unaccountably Agreeable, and which ſurpriſes, tho' we cannot tell wherein thoſe Charms conſiſt. 'Tis the ſame with Speeches full of uncommon Notions and lively Expreſſions, which pleaſe, but leave us in the Dark as to the Thing that makes us reliſh them.

XII.

I am not ſurpris'd, that a *Wit* ſhould indeavour to gain himſelf a Reputation by his *Poetry* or *Rhetorick*. As thoſe two Things do almoſt wholly depend on the Imagination, he may promiſe himſelf ſucceſs from his natural Talent. But that he ſhould take upon him to be an *Hiſtorian*, and pretend to write *Hiſtory*, is an unpardonable Temerity, becauſe nothing can be more contrary to his Character. I do not mean thoſe Books that go under the Name of little *Hiſtories* or *Romances*, the chief Deſign of which is to amuſe and pleaſe with fine Expreſſions and Fictions, and therefore a *Wit* may here come off with Honour. But I mean *Hiſtories* of States, or particular Men illuſtrious either by their Birth or Merit. And I wonder, chiefly for theſe two Reaſons, at the Confidence of certain pretended *Wits* who undertake to write ſuch *Hiſtories*. The firſt is, becauſe they are ignorant of them; and the ſecond, becauſe they are oblig'd to diſguiſe that little Inſight they have in them.

To make what we advanced plainer, 'tis neceſſary to make ſome Reflections on what we commonly underſtand by *Hiſtory*, on the Manner of Studying it, and on

the End we propoſe to our ſelves by that Study.

I think I may ſafely ſay, that moſt Men look upon *Hiſtory* to be nothing elſe but a Relation of Facts, a Heap of Names, and a long Collection of Events; that all the Application it requires, conſiſts in retaining the Names, bringing the Facts together, and charging the Memory with them, to have 'em ready upon all Occaſions, ſo as to make our ſelves acceptable in Company and diſtinguiſh'd in the World.

In order to which we may obſerve, that people apply themſelves to reading, and running over all the *Hiſtorians* one after another, both *Ancient* and Modern, Good and Bad. As for Order they follow none, but regulate themſelves in that Point only as Occaſion, and certain Circumſtances of Time, require one *Hiſtory* to be more preſent to them than another, and all this to flatter their Vanity to which they ſacrifice every Thing. If we did not know the influence of humane Pride, we could hardly believe that Men ſhould judge ſo ill of *Hiſtory*, and that they ſhould make ſo mean an Uſe of it. Yet it is but too Evident, and the Error is no leſs General than Groſs.

XIII. *Hiſtory*

XIII.

History comprehends the Knowledge of Times and Ages, the Alliances of Families the Revolutions of States, and Interest of Princes, their Characters, memorable Actions, and the Means and Methods they imploy'd to execute them, as well as a Knowledge of the Actions of several other Men of Name and Reputation. And indeed the knowledge of those Things deserves our Application.

But the end we ought to propose to our selves herein should be Instruction and Knowledge, for we can propose nothing else to our selves by our Studies, but to render our selves Experienced and Virtuous. If we go upon other Designs, they are in every respect Vain and False, and we cannot excuse the Weakness of those that are guilty of them.

If we make Knowledge and Virtue the scope of our reading, *History* comprehends every thing necessary for so great an End. 'Tis a large Field where we may reap an infinite Number of excellent Lessons, left us by the Author, without designing any such thing, who in their Time wrote more for their own Honour than our Instructions; and nothing but our own ill manage-

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ment can deprive us of ſo happy and ſo plentiful a Harveſt.

The firſt falſe Step they who deprive themſelves of this Advantage make, is when they ſuppoſe they have perform'd their Duty, by burdening they Memory with abundance of Chronology, in giving a punctual Account of Families, from the higheſt down to the loweſt Branch; in filling their Minds with a Series of Occurrences, as difficult to be retain'd as they are ill digeſted. All this cannot but darken the Mind inſtead of inlightning it, and load us inſtead of inſtructing us.

On the contrary, by the End every one ought to propoſe to himſelf in his Studies, 'tis eaſie to judge that nothing but a ſerious Attention, can give us that Profit we might otherwiſe expect from the ſtudy of *Hiſtory*. This Study does not conſiſt, in reading *Hiſtory* ſimply to ſatisfie the Curioſity we have to know what was acted in former Ages; but rather to have an Occaſion of comparing the Paſt with the Preſent, with relation to the Time to come. In this the great Advantage we receive from *Hiſtory* conſiſts, as well in relation to the Mind, as to the Heart. Which is thus.

XIV. We

XIV.

We know that to what Science ſoever we apply our ſelves, a good Wit, good Inſtructions, and Induſtry are neceſſary Conditions to make us Proficients in it, and that good Maſters are a great Help to us to remove the Difficulties we meet with. But, with all thoſe Diſpoſitions and helps, we cannot fully maſter it, till after a great Application and long Exerciſe. Let our Beginning be never ſo promiſing, our ſucceeding Care never ſo great, nothing but a conſummate Experience can make a great Man.

Hiſtory ſupplies the defect of Age and Experience in Men that make a good Uſe of it; I mean ſuch as can judge of what is to come by what's paſt, and to regulate the preſent both by the one and the other; which is the moſt conſiderable Benefit of this Science. Thoſe that neglect this Advantage, or are not capable of taking it, had beſt lay aſide this Study, how good ſoever their Memory may be to retain what they read.

Our Mind is full of Difficulties and Clouds which darken it, and that Trouble the moſt acute Men meet with in great Enterpriſes, does but too much prove the Weakneſs of our Underſtanding. The Knowledge

ledge of *History* may help to diſſipate thoſe Clouds, not only by ſetting before our Eyes an infinite Variety of Events and particular Affairs, but by giving us an Occaſion to penetrate into the moſt hidden Cauſes of Events by Reflections, and ſo enabling us to diſcover the ſecret Springs of Affairs, their Motives and Inducements, with the Contexture that ſerves to juſtify them. What ſignifies it for a Man to know what is paſt, if he be ignorant of the Reaſons and Cauſes of it? he only ſatisfies his Curioſity, and keeps himſelf in Ignorance.

What is paſt can neither ſerve the preſent nor what is to come, any otherwiſe than by the Coherencies we diſcover between what is already done, and what may be done. Thoſe Coherencies are different. Some outward, ſuch as ſhew apparent reſemblances between the Things we compare. Others inward, ſuch as are inherent in the very Body of the Subject, of Cauſes and Circumſtances, and theſe diſcover perfect Reſemblances. For the Diſcovery therefore of theſe Coherencies we ought to ſearch into the very Bottom, without ſtopping at the Surface. And nothing but this particular Diſcovery of the Ground and Bottom of Things, can ſupply the place of Experience, and make Hiſto-

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ry, as to the Mind, ſupply the Defects of Age.

XV.

Since *Hiſtory* is full of great and manifold Examples of Prudence, Generoſity, and Vertue, the Heart may improve it ſelf as well as the Mind. Has any Thing ſo much Power over us as Example? Does it not perſuade us a hundred times more than all the Eloquence of the *Orators*? If this has the Force to move us, Example which is more powerful, often hurries us away without giving us time to recollect our ſelves.

But, whereas good Examples are for the moſt part mix'd with bad, and theſe make as great, if not a greater Impreſſion on us than the others, therefore an exquiſite Judgment is requir'd to avoid the ſecond, and follow the firſt. Precipitation in this Caſe is dangerous, and would be apt to hurry us into Miſtakes. 'Twould make us find in *Hiſtory* Fewel to inflame our Paſſions, inſtead of Means to moderate them.

Nor muſt we be upon our Guard againſt bad Examples only, for in ſome Senſe good ones may prove injurious. We may admire great Examples, without pretending to follow them; ſome we may both eſteem and follow, but there are none we can in all reſpects imitate. Tho-

Tho' we often discover what will be, or ought to be done, by what is already past, and may determine ourselves by the Example of others; yet there is something very singular in Facts, which alters the Species, and requires a prudent regard. Capacity is requisite in every Thing, but not every where the same. For which Reason one of the greatest *Politicians* of our Age did not require an entire and exact Knowledge of *History* in a States Man, but only a general Insight into it; because, said he, the Occasions and Circumstances not being the same at all times, he is more to be esteem'd for the Penetration of his Mind, than for his Knowledge. He might have said more; for Accidents and Circumstances are sometimes the same, and yet the Events vary. So that, to avoid Mistakes, we must be very wary and circumspect; and I defy the most happy Memory furnish'd with the finest Passages of *History*, to keep one from being misled.

XVI.

If this Science can make a good *Politician*, if it instructs one how to live like a Man of Honour, and to govern himself as a wise and Prudent Man; it must be granted, that this happens only when 'tis well understood

ſtood by the Mind, and acquir'd by Reflections. Imagination and Memory are no more requiſite to it, than to fix our Thoughts on what we examine, or to bring into our Mind what has been formerly examin'd by us; which is done much eaſier by Reflection, than by bare Reading without it. For 'tis certain that Reflection is a mighty Help to make us Remember, and that Judgment is a very great Aſſiſtant to Memory; tho' as I have formerly obſerv'd 'tis of little Help to the Judgment, and may in one Sence be an Hindrance to it.

'Twould be over-ſtraining the Point, to ſay on this Hypotheſis, that a happy Memory is no good Quality for the ſolid learning of *Hiſtory*. But that it is not the beſt, nor the moſt neceſſary, and that it is not the Quality we ought to make moſt Uſe of to arrive at the perfect Knowledge of *Hiſtory*, is a Truth not to be denied.

The Knowledge of the World is alſo one of the moſt conſiderable Advantages we can reap from *Hiſtory*; but it is becauſe that Science has its Principle in the Knowledge of Man, and that *Hiſtory* gives us perfectly that Knowledge. I mean a Moral Knowledge, rather than Metaphyſical, about which the *Philoſophers* raiſe endleſs Diſputes.

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The World is a Multitude compos'd of People, made almoſt like Machines reſembling each other, but with very different Motions and Actions. A Man cannot know the World without knowing thoſe People, together with the different Motives that make them Act; and, as the Whole is ſcarce to be known without a particular Knowledge of its Parts, ſo we can have no perfect Knowledge of the World, without a previous Knowledge of the Men who compoſe it.

Hiſtory affords us true Paintings of Men's Hearts, ſuch as repreſent it to the Life, that ſhew us what 'tis, and what 'tis capable of. It lays open the Paſſions of Man, and draws 'em more lively than thoſe learned Works that *Authors* have written.

It teaches us to know what Imagination ſupported by Paſſion can do, and what the Motions of this are, when actuated by the other. We alſo know by it what Reaſon can, or cannot do, together with its Strength and Weakneſs. The Man and the Hero appear there, and we diſcover the ſecret Springs which make them act, in ſpight of the vain Diſguiſe made uſe of to hide them. The Life of Man is too ſhort to make all theſe Diſcoveries in thoſe we ſee and converſe with during our Abode here;

here; we must, as it were lengthen, and stretch it out, by joining to it those Men's Lives who are gone before us, and make them serve instead of Old Age to us, which only can defend us from the Ignorance and Surprizes of Youth. *History* lays before us all those Lives, not so much to content our Curiosity, as to fill our Hearts with excellent Maxims of Politicks and Morals, to regulate thereby our Conduct.

Conversation alone makes not an excellent Man; the use of Books alone, much less. To acquire that Quality, we must know how to mix those two Things with Discretion, observe what passes in the World, and reflect upon what has been done. To *History* we must join our own experience, I mean a true, faithful and exact *History*, such as is the Work of some faithful knowing *Historian*; not a disguis'd and fabulous *History* which has receiv'd as many Alterations, as it has employ'd Pens, and comes from a suspected and prejudiced *Author*.

XVII.

As for the Order and Method commonly observ'd in this difficult Study, it seems to me very different from what ought to be follow'd; Men being for the most part guided

ded in it by their Capricio and Fancy. Some are for reading *Hiſtory* over and over, it being a Thing as it were impoſſible but that the Mind muſt retain ſomething out of ſo much Variety. Others would have us read all ſorts of Books indifferently, at leaſt to accuſtom our ſelves to Books and Reading, but wherein lies the Excellency, to read much, and make no Advantage by it? Ignorance is doubtleſs preferable to ſuch Learning that is more proper to corrupt the Heart than to inſtruct the Mind.

Tho' we curſorily run over all the *Hiſtorians*, and read all their Books; tho' by a wonderful and amazing Strength of Memory we can remember all we read, yet we may ſtill be very far from underſtaning *Hiſtory*, as knowing as we may ſeem to appear in it to the Eyes of the Vulgar, who are always ignorant and eaſy to be ſurpriz'd.

Whatever Advantage one may reap from this Science, how great ſoever his Genius may be, he will not be much the wiſer for it, unleſs he makes ſome Difference between Knowing or Remembring after he has read, and Underſtanding or Judging after he has examin'd.

A Man of Wit, with all his Genius, his lively, ſtrong, and capacious Imagination, and his happy Memory, is therefore far from

from underſtanding *Hiſtory*, becauſe he is endow'd but with the leaſt part of thoſe neceſſary Diſpoſitions for that Study, and is incapable of the Principal ones.

What I have ſaid of *Hiſtory*, of the Manner of learning it, and of the End Men ſhould propoſe to themſelves in that Study, being compar'd with what our *Men of Wit* think of it, the Method they uſe to underſtand it, and the End they propoſe to themſelves by it, does viſibly make it appear how incapacitated they are to write *Hiſtory*, and how raſh to undertake a Work they know ſo little of, and are not in a Condition to underſtand.

A great Capacity of Mind, a ſtrong Penetration to diſcover the Truth of Things, and a competent Sincerity to ſpeak it, are Qualities abſolutely neceſſary for a good *Hiſtorian*. How many do we find thus qualified? Moſt of them want Capacity, for want of Reflecting; a great many Sincerity, becauſe they want Liberty. Slaves to their Reputation, I will not ſay to their Intereſt, and ſeduc'd by their *Wit*, they take leſs Care to write the Truth, than to Flatter and write finely. They are led by common Opinion, and guided by a falſe Politeneſs.

On

On this Subject I ſhall remark a particular Fault of our Man of *Wit*, *viz.* that he ſeldom writes but at other Mens Coſt and Labour. He has the Conſcience to appropriate to himſelf what does not belong to him, and the Secret to make it paſs for his own. As great a *Tranſcriber* as he is, he gives his Works the Air of Originals, by which he impoſes on Mankind. He changes, turns, and diſguiſes, and ſo alters the Matter, that he ſcarce leaves any Title to the Proprietor, by which he may defend his Right. But, ſhould we take it to pieces, and (according to the Law of Nature) reſtore to every one what belong'd unto him, what would there remain in this *Plagiary*? a new Turn of Expreſſion, a few Choice Words, another Style and way of Expreſſion. This is all we can allow him, and in Effect 'tis all that belongs to him, as appears by thoſe numerous Volumes of ſtragling *Hiſtories*, which ſome certain *Wits* expoſe every day to the World, and which owe the Succeſs they have for a Time, merely to the Charms of Novelty.

XVIII.

If amongſt our *Wits* ſome value themſelves for *Poetry*, ſome for *Oratory*, others for *Hiſtory*, there are ſome who vainly pretend

tend to all three; and tho' they will not give themſelves the Trouble to write, yet gain Eſteem by a Sort of Learning, which according to them conſiſts in knowing the *Poets*, and underſtanding other *Authors*, but moſt of all the Ancient and Modern *Hiſtorians*. It will not be improper therefore to make ſome few Reflections on the uſe ſome of our *Wits* make of this Science, and for which they value themſelves under the ſpecious Name of fine *Learning*. The Knowledge of the *Belles Lettres* is, of all Sciences the moſt generally purſued, and cultivated by all ſorts of People that pretend the leaſt to Learning. 'Tis what is firſt taught our Youth, whatever Imployment they are deſign'd for; and if ſome afterwards ſlight it as an Amuſement proper only for Youth, others find ſuch Delight in it, as to make it the ſerious Occupation of their whole Lives.

The *Mathematicks*, *Philoſophy*, *Phyſick*, *Law*, and *Divinity*, divide Learned Men between them: But all of them agree in their Pretenſions to the *Belles Lettres*. Every Man ſets up for it, none undervalue it, and if any one has made but a little progreſs in it, 'tis rather imputed to the Defect of his Memory, than his Remiſſneſs to inſtruct himſelf in it.

From

From all this a Man wou'd be apt to infer, that this Science muſt needs be of a wonderful Advantage, and that we have ſome great Deſigns on foot, when we make it our ſole Imployment. But if we conſider the Method us'd to attain it, we may well be ſurpris'd, that we can't diſcover what End Men propoſe to themſelves by this Study, and we ſhall have Reaſon to believe that moſt of them take it up without any End at all.

We put into the hands of Children, *Poets* and other *Authors*, to explain and learn by Heart. We force them to this Study by Puniſhments, or intice them by Rewards. They apply themſelves to it for a conſiderable Time; then reſt there, without conſidering what their Study ought to tend to, nor of what Uſe it may be to them hereafter. If we ask the *School-maſters*, who ought to give us ſatisfaction in this point, what their Deſign is in their Imployment, they tell us, ſometimes, 'tis only to exerciſe the Memory of Youth, ſometimes to accuſtom them betimes to love Books and Reading, and in ſhort, to give them an univerſal and general Knowledge of Things.

Theſe are very general, and indeed very Childiſh Ends; and I do not admire, that they who know no other, ſhould think this

this pretended Science only fit for a *College*, and the Imployment of *School-boys*.

Thoſe who take a Pride to ſtudy it, after another manner, and to make it of greater Uſe; who pretend by the Help of it to be reckoned among the Learned, and gain a Reputation among the *Wits* of the World, find out more noble Advantages by it. Of which this is not the leaſt, that by this Learning they acquire a Politeneſs of Mind not to be had any other Way, how great ſoever their Natural Parts may be.

Theſe Men doubtleſs are in the right. Learning poliſhes and inſtructs the Mind, gives a reliſh to good Things, and inſpires a delicacy of Fancy. 'Tis chiefly by thoſe Inducements that this Science is of ſuch an Univerſal Uſe, and that this ſame Study, which ſeems moſt to ſavour of *School-learning* is that which diſtinguiſhes us the moſt from a *Pedant*.

I do therefore agree as to the End, but I cannot approve of the uſual Means made uſe of to arrive at it. Whilſt Men will content themſelves with reading careleſly the *Poets* and all other *Authors* without Judgment and Choice, only to know what Subjects they have treated of, in what Time they wrote, and the Names of thoſe Perſons they diſcours'd of; whilſt they ſhall

think they have done enough if they have faithfully retain'd a few Apophthegms which they don't underſtand, or ſome Verſes, or ſome whole Pages of a Book ill digeſted; and that they will value themſelves, for reciting with aſſurance what they never learn'd but confuſedly; As it is no more than the Effect of a happy Memory, ſo the pretended Advantage of ſo trivial a Knowledge will be but a ridiculous Vanity, an Accompliſhment more becoming a *Pedant* than a *Gentleman*.

But if on the contrary, according to the Example of thoſe ingenious *Grecians* whoſe Learning and Politeneſs has render'd their Nation Famous, Men would make uſe of this Science but to poliſh what may be rough and courſe in their Nature, to inſpire more delicate Thoughts, and give the Mind a more noble and excellent Impreſſion; As that will be the Effect of well digeſted Learning, ſo the Fruit of this Science will be much more exquiſite, and the Science it ſelf more eſteem'd.

XIX.

In this we ought to agree with all Men of Judgment, that the Knowledge of humaine Learning is proper to Ingenious Men; but we muſt alſo confeſs, that it is ſometimes

times the Occupation of Blockheads, by the ill uſe which may be made of it.

To ſtore up in ones Memory a confus'd Heap of Paſſages of *Authors*, and Sentences of *Poets*; to repeat very often in Converſation a Latin Verſe of one of the ancient *Poets* when we have juſt heard one of the Company ſay the ſame thing very naturally in Engliſh; to buſie our ſelves in what place we found the Sentence we quoted, and of which we have forgot the *Author*, rather than conſider if it be to the purpoſe, is the blind ſide of this Science, and we cannot but very much deſpiſe it, if look'd upon with this Diſadvantage. But to read with Reflexion, to diſtinguiſh the true from the falſe, the good from the ill, to penetrate with Judgment into the real Senſe of an *Author*, to accuſtom ones ſelf inſenſibly to the Delicacy that a *Poet* inſpires, to reliſh the real Charms and reject the falſe, and never to talk in Company but to the purpoſe and with Diſcretion; to forget ſometimes the fine Expreſſions we admire in an *Author*, and ſtick only to his Truths, and ſo get an Habit of Politeneſs and Ingenuity; In a word, to be leſs careful of loading our Memory, than forming our Mind, is the right Uſe of Learning, and that which makes the whole value of it.

I do not fear to ſay it, we ſee very Few who turn it to this good Uſe. A *Wit* particularly ſhews he never knew the Importance of it, who applies himſelf to it only to fill his Imagination, exerciſe his Memory, and ſo paſs for a Nice and Ingenious Man, without being either. What may be he never underſtood is, that there is a falſe Delicacy to be avoided, and a vain Politeneſs to be fear'd. 'Tis neceſſary to give to the Mind thoſe Ornaments and Graces which are not natural to it, to which Learning contributes more than any Thing elſe. But we ought to take care, that by endeavouring to poliſh it, we do not weaken it, and that too much Delicacy do's not render it Little or Effeminate. 'Tis with the Mind as with any fine Pieces of Workmanſhip; which become weak and brittle by being too nicely wrought. The laſt ſtroke of the Carver's Chiſel very often ſpoils all his Work, and Experience convinces us, that many Men have corrupted their Judgments and Fancy by too much refining them.

XX.

'Tis common enough with thoſe who value themſelves for their Learning, to be more touch'd with a fine Impreſſion than with

with the Thing expreſſed, tho' perhaps more Admirable than the Expreſſion it ſelf. The Reaſon is, that, if they have Senſe enough to be charm'd with the Expreſſion, they have not Judgment enough to penetrate into the Goodneſs of the Thing expreſſed. Their Fancy is too delicate, and too much poliſhed to be Solid; they have taken away its Force, under pretence of rendring it more Polite. Thus nothing ſeems fine to them but what agreeably moves and delights, and they take notice of nothing but what ſhines and ſurpriſes, not conſidering that the Ornaments Men make uſe of to imbelliſh their Diſcourſe, let them be of what nature they will, ſhould be regarded only, but as ſo many Charms which draw us to a ſtricter and nearer Conſideration of thoſe Things, either to know them, or make them uſeful. 'Tis the Road that leads us to it, but 'tis a mighty Weakneſs to ſtop there.

I am not of the Opinion of thoſe moroſe and ſevere *Criticks*, who condemn every Thing that has but the Air of politeneſs and neatneſs of Fancy; who forbid us to alter any thing from that rough and deform'd State wherein Nature left it. A State they admire the more, as beſt agreeing with the groſſneſs and coarſneſs of their

Minds; as if the Works of Nature were ſo accompliſh'd, that Art muſt lie ſtill, and have nothing to do. When Beauty it ſelf, in order to gain admiration, is found to borrow Ornaments, which raiſe and ſet out its Charms. And ſo the Mind ought to turn its Thoughts in ſuch a Manner as may raiſe and make them better reliſh'd and eſteem'd. Without this help, 'twould be like Gold mix'd with the Earth, which keeps it from our Sight, and intirely hides its Luſtre.

Having ſaid in another Place, that Imagination makes the fineneſs and delicacy of the Mind, 'twould be giving my ſelf the lye to diſapprove the good Uſe one may make of it, and to reject all ſort of Politeneſs, either in Speaking or Writing, ſince it would be to retrench the Effects, when we have admitted the Cauſe. The Imagination, like a skilful Workwoman, who chuſes the beſt Methods to put her Deſign in hand, makes uſe of Books, as neceſſary Inſtruments to give a fineneſs and politeneſs to the Mind, which is to be attain'd no other Way.

But I have already ſaid it, and I ſay it again, that, if the Mind wants Penetration and Judgment, if Reaſon is not advis'd with in all Things, if it does not always march

march at the head, if Imagination gets the ſtart, or does not conſult it, all Delicacy is vain, the Charms fallacious, and can only pleaſe the Vulgar, and Men of no Penetration.

A Man of *Wit*, who ſets forth thoſe Charms with ſo much Confidence in all Companies whatſoever, may ſometimes ſurpriſe by a falſe Politeneſs, which makes him skilfully diſguiſe his own Weakneſs to himſelf, and hide it from others; but we perceive it at laſt through all its Diguiſes; and the Remark I have often made, that the Man of *Wit* is not a *Wit* at all times, nor before all ſorts of Perſons, is enough of it ſelf to raiſe the Doubt, or take off the Mask. The Mode of it changes, as that of Cloaths in *France*. Our ancient *Authors* do not ſeem leſs Fantaſtical to us by ſome Pieces of Wit they have left us, than by the Habits they wore. Their Puns, Equivocations, Sentences, and certain merry Tales which were the choiceſt Productions of their *Wit*, for the moſt part, are as much out of Faſhion, as their Ruffs and round Breeches. So will the *Wit* of our Time be changed as that of former Ages was for this; and future Ages perhaps will be ſurpris'd, how 'twas poſſible for us to be pleas'd with it.

How can a Man of *Wit* assure himself of a more happy Destiny, when he can scarce promise himself a better at present? If lik'd here, he is disliked elsewhere; if applauded to day, 'twill be own'd a mistake to morrow. As his whole Study is to please the Fancy, so Men judge of it only by Caprice. He is but slighted or extolled, as the Blood is more coagulated, or rarefied, more heated, or chilled: Men are the same in respect of Wit, as of Colours. As the liveliest Colours please them at one time, the dullest at another; so they are sometimes for the lofty and sublime, and sometimes for the plain and natural. As for what comes from a Man of Judgment, I find the World is not so changeable, being as it were forced to esteem him, in any State or Condition, tho' somewhat coldly. An Argument that the Imagination is not very well satisfi'd with the honour we pay to Reason.

XXI.

I make, you see, a great difference between Reason, and Fancy. All the World talks of this, and would have it in Perfection, and no Man explains what it is. For ought I know, it may be one of those Things we should make more obscure by at-

attempting to define it. If I may tell my Thoughts of it, it ſeems to me a confus'd, but natural Sentiment of the Soul, which mōves independantly from its other Lights. This Sentiment is caus'd by the Conformity there is, between the Imagination or the Senſes, and the Objects offered unto them; becauſe the Impreſſion the Objects make on the Bodies is naturally follow'd by Sentiments of the Soul, agreeable or diſagreeable, according to the Conformity between the Soul and thoſe Objects.

But whatever is meant by Fancy, this we muſt agree in, that it cannot be good and right, any farther than it is conformable to Reaſon, and follows it cloſe; nor can a Man be ſaid to have a good Fancy, but when he loves nothing but what is True, Natural, and Juſt. Whatever is Falſe or Confus'd, without either Clearneſs or Reaſon, is Naught, and ought to be ſo eſteem'd, if our Fancy be not deprav'd. But 'tis very ſeldom that Fancy which ſprings from the Diſpoſitions of the Body ſubject to ſo many alterations, agrees with Reaſon which is always uniform; I mean, that confus'd Sentiments and a clear Underſtanding ſhould hold together. Nor is it a matter of Wonder that what proceeds

from Fancy, having a Dependancy on the Body, ſhould be liable to ſo great alterations, nothing but Reaſon being Immutable of it ſelf

In Effect, good Senſe which makes us diſcourſe like reaſonable Men, is the ſame that made the Ancients ſpeak rationally alſo. Humour, Fancy, and Faſhions may change; but Reaſon is the ſame in all Ages, and knows no *Viciſſitude*.

We muſt therefore of neceſſity reliſh the ancient *Authors*, where they write good Senſe; we need not fear being diſapproved by thoſe who ſhall come after us, if we write after the ſame manner.

Every Thing that comes from a Man of *Wit* is much more pleaſing, becauſe it moves Men more lively, but it does not pleaſe long. A Man of *Judgment* pleaſes not ſo much, becauſe he does not touch ſo ſenſibly, but then he always pleaſes.

PART

PART III.

Of WIT *in the* Affairs *of the* World.

I.

THE Ancient Philoſophers who left certain Methods, how we ought to regulate our Conduct and Manners for the whole Courſe of our Lives, have conſider'd Men relatively to their different Stations; either in themſelves, and as private Perſons; or in a Family, as making part of it; or in the State, as Members thereof. They have conſider'd 'em, either as living privately, or rais'd to ſome Dignity; either ſtudying their own proper Intereſt, and managing their particular Affairs, or ingaged in the Publick, and intruſted with Affairs of State. For indeed theſe two Occupations imploy the greateſt part of Mankind. Of which two ſorts of Imployment, a *Wit* in my Opinion is very little capable, no

no more than of thoſe Inſtructions that might be given him upon that Subject.

For the moſt part thoſe who have the Reputation of *Wits* in the World, want two Qualities which are abſolutely neceſſary to make a compleat and able Man; *viz.* *Force* and *Liberty* of Mind. They want Force, ſince too conſtant application to Buſineſs tires them, and it is not in their Power to beſtow a ſerious Attention on what they are about; either the ſprightlineſs and fire of their Minds do's tranſport them beyond the Bounds of Attention, or a falſe notion of Delicacy makes them neglect it. They alſo want Liberty of Mind, or at leaſt are almoſt incapable of uſing it; for being Haſty and Impatient, they judge without examining, and decide without making Reflexions. Accuſtomed to paſs over every Thing ſlightly and without penetration, their Tongues run before their Wit, and are eaſily prepoſſeſſed, becauſe they will not allow themſelves time to conſider. So that they have two Qualities diametrically oppoſite to Ability in Affairs, that is, want of Application and Raſhneſs, or Prejudice.

II. The

II.

The natural Diſpoſition of a *Stupid Man* tho' very contrary to that of a *Wit*, renders a Man every jot as uncapable for the management of Affairs. If the Thoughts of the one are too diſſipated, the other is too ſlow. One ſpoils all by too much Action, the other by too little; and both the one and the other want Perſeverance.

The *Stupid* (I mean one in the moſt common Signification, there being ſeveral ſorts of them as well as of *Wits*) is always timorous and cautious, dares neither undertake nor do any Thing; not unlike Men that travel an unfrequented Road, who are apprehenſive of every Thing, becauſe they ſee nothing that can remove their Fears. He prefers Eaſe to Buſineſs, and is incapable of any Employment, by Reaſon of two Defects which are natural to him, *viz.* Inactivity and Diſtruſt.

Yet all Things have their different Aſpect, and nothing is ſo exactly uniform, but ſhews different Sides. We muſt therefore apply our ſelves to know them thoroughly, before we pretend to judge of them. Which a *Wit*, and one that is *Stupid*, either don't do at all, or elſe do it ill. It ſeems therefore to be the peculiar Talent of a *Man of Judgment*,

ment, who alone keeps a juſt *Medium* between theſe two Extreams, worthily to acquit himſelf in this Affair. On the one hand Penetration improves his Strength of Reaſon, and on the other Moderation preſerves to him its Liberty. Thus both reſerv'd and vigilant, he undertakes without Temerity, and goes on with Aſſurance. He turns Things on every Side, beholds them in every Part, and ſo carries along with him two eſſential Diſpoſitions for the Management of Affairs, *viz.* Application and Judgment. One is the Effect of the Strength, the other of the Liberty of his Mind; which are as it were the general Perfections, from whence all the other ſpring, and wherein his true Merit wholly conſiſts.

But this Character is ſo oppoſite to that of a *Wit*, that we never find them re-united in one and the ſame Perſon. To talk indifferently and ſuperficially of all Things, is very different from diving into the bottom of them. To ſhew Subtlety and Cunning in Conſultations, is not unravelling and reſolving Affairs. The Gift of diſcourſing agreeably is quite a different Talent from that of making judicious Reflections. The Natural Diſpoſitions of the one make him uncapable of thoſe Things which fit and prepare him for others. To make a Man

Man of ſprightly *Wit*, the Humours muſt be brisk and in Motion, and the Animal Spirits full of Fire and Heat. Whereas a cold Blood with a greater Portion of Phlegm, and a well regulated Courſe of Animal Spirits, are proper for Men of good Senſe: Whoſe Character it is to be quick-ſighted in their Deliberations, conſtant in their Reſolutions, unſhaken in their Enterprizes, well inform'd what Party they are to take upon all Occaſions, and conſequently more cautious in their Choice.

The others Character on the contrary, is to be ſhort ſighted in their Views, prepoſſeſs'd by their Deſigns, as Raſh to reſolve, as Weak to execute. How vaſt is the Difference! One is brisk and lively, and the other thoughtful and judicious; One has a ſharp agreeable Wit, the other good and ſolid. Which doubtleſs gave Occaſion to a great Politician of our Times to ſay of theſe two ſorts of Wit, that one was made for Pleaſure, and the other for Buſineſs.

III.

To what purpoſe ſhould we uſe Arguments, to prove the Truth of theſe Differences which Experience it ſelf makes ſo evident? 'Tis but caſting our Eyes upon the daily Paſſages in the Commerce of the World.

World. How many Men are there that cannot tolerably acquit themſelves in Converſation, who very cunningly wind themſelves out of a Buſineſs? As dull and inſipid as they are in Company, you will find them both ſharp and ſucceſsful in their Enterprizes. Theſe Men neither delight, nor render themſelves agreeable; but make a ſound Judgment of Things, and become often uſeful and neceſſary. Quite contrary to flaſhy vain *Wits*, who are admir'd in Converſation; but are the worſt of Men in Buſineſs; all Fire and Life to undertake, but have little Conduct to ſucceed.

Let us not ſtop here, but inquire farther into the Matter. Do we owe the wiſe Management of Publick Affairs to our Men of Wit? Is it a quick Imagination, or good Senſe and Judgment that ſupports the Weight of them? 'Tis neither a vain Subtlety nor a pretended Delicacy, but a ſound Capacity and Solidity of Mind, which makes us value thoſe Illuſtrious Men that govern States and Kingdoms. With Submiſſion to our *Wits* be it ſaid, 'tis not their Deſtiny to be plac'd ſo high.

IV.

There are whole Nations born with excellent Diſpoſitions, that are as proper for the

the Government of a State, as neceſſary for the Eaſe of Men in a private Capacity. In thoſe Nations if Men be cold and ſlow, they are but the more clear ſighted, and the wiſer for it. One would think Nature had ſtudied to caſt them in a thicker Mould, and by the Solidity of their Judgments to make them amends for the Politeneſs ſhe has denied them. If their Thoughts are not fine and lively, yet they argue wiſely and judiciouſly, they don't affect to make an Oſtentation of their Parts, ſo much as to be ſilent when 'tis proper, and reflect on what is before them. They keep an equal ſteddy Pace, moſt commonly regular in their Actions, reſerv'd in their Motions, and ſtricty united for the Publick Good which is in reality their own. Thus a prudent Simplicity raiſes them to true Greatneſs.

On theſe ſolid Foundations ſtands the whole Body they form, whoſe Members are united with ſo much Proportion, govern'd with ſo much Juſtneſs, kept up with ſo much Order and Precaution, that they are ſcarce ever liable to thoſe fatal Diſtempers which at laſt deſtroy the moſt healthy Kingdoms. The Genius of the Nation in general animates this Body, and makes all its Actions conſtant, regular, and uniform.

form. This Genius preſides in their Counſels, ſupports the Weight of their Affairs, and reſolutely carries on their Enterprizes to the very laſt.

But it muſt be allow'd, that if Nature has been ſo favourable to thoſe Nations, ſhe has not been entirely unkind to others; and what ſhe has not bountifully beſtow'd in General, ſhe has however granted to ſome in Particular. Some Defects we are born with, proper as it were to the Country and Climate we live in, and there are others, which we contract. In the ſame manner, there are both Natural and Acquir'd Qualities. And as, abſolutely ſpeaking, Men have very few good Qualities which they may not ſometimes loſe; ſo they have very few bad ones but they may at one time or other correct.

Good Education, Civil Society, the Converſation of the World, the Neceſſity of Affairs, Ripeneſs of Years, and above all the Uſe of Reaſon in that Age, may make great Alterations in the Mind, in any Place, or Countrey. For indeed, Reaſon is common to all States, and Nations, and if there be Climates, or happy Temperaments better diſpoſed to follow it than others, there are none ſo very Unfortunate, but with due care may ſurmount thoſe Obſtacles.

If

If ſome Men will not allow this, but will affirm that there are Invincible Obſtacles, I will prevent their Objection by owning theſe two before hand, viz. *Stupidity* and *Wit*. 'Tis not without Reaſon that Stupidity may ſeem Invincible in ſome Tempers, a *Stupid Man* being ſo very ſlow and dull of Conception that he is incapable of all Inſtructions, and his Heavineſs ſuch, that it cannot be raiſed by any Counter ballance.

But if we could as eaſily ſee, without any other Reflexion, what the Defects of a *Wit* are, I am well aſſured we ſhould find him equally incurable. If there be no Way to conquer the Heavineſs of a *Stupid Man*, what Means can be uſed to fix the Levity of a *Wit*? Education, ſuch as is commonly beſtow'd, ſerves only to countenance it. Pride, the natural Source of this Defect, do's always ſide with Imagination againſt Reaſon, which is too weak, and too much ſuſpected to be regarded. The advantage of good Senſe is neither perceived nor acknowledged. A Man of *Wit* is prepoſſeſs'd by his Talents and pretended good Parts, what then can we expect from him, if he be ſtill Stubborn and Intractable? And how can he be otherwiſe? Nay, I will make it appear, that this Defect is ſo much the

more

more peculiar to a *Wit*, as it is the effect of Presumption, which is so natural to him.

V.

'Tis a receiv'd Maxim among Politicians, that Strength without Counsel destroys it self; and that readiness to follow other Mens Advice, is a Quality no less commendable, than Ability in giving good Counsel. And indeed where is the Genius, how sagacious soever he be, who so orders his Steps in the Affairs he manages, as not to run often the hazard of mistaking himself, for want of asking the right Way, or taking a good Guide?

If any Man runs this hazard, 'tis chiefly your Witty Persons. For I see no Men less capable of giving good Advice, and none less disposed to take it. A famous *Politician* furnishes me with a Reason for it; *He that is not Wise of himself*, says he, *cannot be well advised; because he will neither regard, nor obey, and cannot follow the Precepts which are given him*; which is exactly the Case of a *Wit*.

The great Opinion he has of his own pretended Judgment and Knowledge, makes him scorn and despise the Sentiments of others, and interpret it a Weakness to submit to them. He that takes Advice depends in

in ſome meaſure on him that gives it; but a *Wit*, who is animated and puft up by Pride, affects an Independency in all things. He looks on the Counſel which is given him, to be a kind of Tyranny exerciſed over the Liberty of his Thoughts; and fears not ing ſo much as to be ſuſpected of ſuffering himſelf to be guided by others.

With all his Preſumption, and that all-ſufficient Air he aſſumes, he is as forward to reprove others, as unfit to be reprov'd. He talks with Confidence, decides with Authority, promiſes good Succeſs, and threatens bad, but will not allow Reaſon to examine the Cauſes. Thus taking upon him indiſcreetly to force other Mens Minds, all his Deſigns at laſt prove ineffectual.

Men love to do all things to their own Mind and Fancy. Therefore 'tis a great Art to know how to give them good Advice, and make 'em reliſh it, which few Men are capable of. If we ſeriouſly reflect upon it, the Number of thoſe who do not err, is greater than of thoſe who know how to correct thoſe that err.

VI.

Amongſt the other Imbecillities of a *Wit*, one of the moſt conſiderable is, his Preſumption of doing all Things by Force. A quick

quick and confus'd Sentiment, which hot boyling Blood, and ſharp and agitated Animal Spirits inſpire, make him fooliſhly preſume that nothing eſcapes his Underſtanding. If he finds himſelf at a ſtand, he fancies, 'tis becauſe none can go further; if he miſtakes, 'tis becauſe any Man elſe would have miſtaken as well as himſelf; and taking the Strength and Extent of Imagination, for the Strength and Extent of the Mind, he allows all to Opinion, which ſeduces and leads him aſtray. That's the Rock againſt which he ſplits, Opinion is the Rock of your Men of *Wit*.

'Tis that falſe Light which is the Cauſe of all their Errors in Sciences, and of their bad Conduct in Affairs. From thence come ſo many unuſual and extraordinary Counſels, ill contrived Enterpriſes, falſe Steps, vain Projects, and in the concluſion of all ill Succeſs. For 'tis an Error to ſuppoſe that with little Penetration we can undertake many and great Things, and follow therein our Opinions, with little or no Inſight. Neither ſhould we imagine, that this Penetration and Inſight is ſo natural to the Mind, that we need only let it act to compaſs our Aim. The Mind in one Senſe grows weak and feeble, as well as the Body; both ſtand in need of Nouriſhment, and to be

be provided, either wherewith to ſupport their Strength, or to acquire new when in want of it. Our Mind do's extend or contract, as we extend or contract it. And, as nothing gives it a greater Extent, than the good uſe we make of its Liberty and Judgment; ſo there is nothing that confines us more, than Infatuation, Raſhneſs, and Prejudice. This naturally leads us to Inapplication, and Inapplication feeds our Prejudice. Both concur and aſſiſt each other, to ſpoil and corrupt the Mind. Inapplication makes us judge ſuperficially of all Things, and decide as careleſly. Opinion is the occaſion we never apply our ſelves to any Thing, for it ſeems to ſpare us that Trouble. We are not therefore to wonder, that the leaſt attentive, and moſt infatuated Minds, are always the weakeſt.

VII.

If Opinion be ſo dangerous a Diſtemper, ought we not then to have a due eſteem for the Liberty of the Mind, which is a Cure for it? And what can we think of ſuch as are deprived of it? If a *Wit* wants ſtrength of Reaſon, becauſe his Thoughts are diffuſed, he has the more Occaſion for Liberty and Judgment, becauſe he is too apt to fall into Precipitation.

This

This Defect, which is one of the moſt conſiderable, in relation to Affairs, does not only derive its Origin from the evil Qualities of the Mind, but alſo from the corrupt Diſpoſitions of the Heart. So that if we ſhould allow a *Wit* to have ſome Penetration and Judgment (which he often wants only for want of Attention) that would not be ſufficient; for the Heart often ſpoils what the Mind judiciouſly deſigns.

There ariſe ſometimes from the Heart, certain Paſſions which like a thick Vapour darken the cleareſt and pureſt Underſtandings; and we find certain Motions there, which ſtrongly oppoſe the moſt regular proceedings of the Mind. Which makes it eaſie to conceive, that as the Mind, led by the falſe Lights of an irregular Imagination, often makes us err and go aſtray; ſo the Heart, curbed and domineered by a fooliſh Paſſion, do's no leſs contribute to lead us out of the right Way.

The Mind has its Falſities and Illuſions, and the Heart its Paſſions and Imbecillities; and, as they are our two Guides in all our Actions, it follows that a good and uncorrupted Heart is of as great a Conſequence and as neceſſary for us, as a ſound and undiſturb'd Mind.

I ſhall not here inſiſt upon what is ſo evident

dent to all the World. The horrble Diſorders the Corruption of Mens Hearts, and the Exorbitancy of their Paſſions, occaſion in Governments, are too well known to be denied. I ſhall only remark what is to my Subject, *viz.* what Genius's are, by their proper Character, more or leſs free from thoſe Irregularities.

VIII.

There is ſo great a Conformity between the Diſpoſition of the Mind, and that of the Heart, that for the moſt part they ſeem to me to follow each other. A falſe Mind is commonly attended with a vicious Heart. If that yields to Imagination, Paſſion ſoon gets the Victory over this; and they never fail to communicate reciprocally to each other their good or evil Impreſſions. From whence I conclude, that the quicker the Imagination is, the ſtronger the Paſſions are, and Reaſon the weaker; and that on the contrary the Paſſions are never ſo calm and the Mind ſo free, as when the Imagination is moſt ſubject to it, and in a good Temper.

This being once granted, what ſort of Men muſt we allow to injoy the greateſt Liberty of Miud; either thoſe who by their natural Vanity abandon themſelves to

the flights of their Imagination, and ſo are Slaves to their Paſſions; or thoſe that by their Moderation ſuppreſs the Impetuoſity of 'em by keeping their Imagination under? Which of the two are moſt likely to be miſtaken in their Judgment upon ſuch publick or private Concerns as they are intruſted with? All the World agrees, that the effects of Paſſions and Imagination are always Enemies to Reaſon and good Senſe. We muſt therefore allow that our gay ſparkling *Wits*, whoſe Paſſions are undoubtedly more animated than the others, are leſs capable of the wiſe management of Affairs, which is the effect of Prudence and good Senſe only.

The Paſſions, as another very judicious Author has remarked, are not only excited by the Objects, but likewiſe by the Opinions we are prepoſſeſſed with. The truth is, what we call our Bleſſings, or our Afflictions, is for the moſt part only ſuch as we imagine it; which is the Reaſon why a Man thinks himſelf very unhappy, with that which wou'd make the Happineſs of another. 'Tis Imagination for the moſt part which gives a form to Things, that diminiſhes, or augments, that leſſens, or ſets a value on them; and the moſt frequent Motions of the Paſſions are only the conſequences

quences of a ſenſible Application of the Soul to thoſe Impreſſions and Figures which are made in the Brain. Thoſe Men therefore who have their Brain fulleſt of theſe Images, muſt be moſt taken up with them; and by a neceſſary conſequence moſt moved and concerned. Their Paſſion is their Reaſon, and Imagination their Guide. So that their Minds are ſurrounded with Clouds and Darkneſs, which deprive them of the Liberty of their Judgments.

IX.

We muſt needs have a better Opinion of another ſort of Men, whom a leſs nice and delicate Conſtitution of the Brain, and animal Spirits leſs quick and leſs in motion, make colder and more reſerved. As their Imagination is leſs heated, conſequently their Hearts ought to be leſs agitated, and their Minds freer.

The Violence of the Paſſions is every where felt, but they do not domineer in all Perſons with the ſame Power. A nice flaſhy *Wit* may be carry'd away by the Strength of Paſſion, againſt which one of a reſerved ſolid *Judgment* would make an eaſie Reſiſtance: Who not being ſo ſenſibly touched by the Impreſſion of the Objects,

and leſs ſubject to the Surpriſes of Imagination, (two infallible Cauſes of the Emotion of the Soul) muſt needs both enjoy a greater Tranquility and be capable of better reaſoning.

I ſpeak of Paſſions, as I have done of Imagination, and blame the Exceſs only. We ſhould regulate but not deſtroy them; for a Man without Paſſions is a meer Chimera. Imagination has its Uſe, and Graces; the Paſſions in the ſame manner have their Uſe and Advantages. But like the beſt Things, they become dangerous by the ill application we make of them. They trouble, tranſport, and corrupt the Heart; they blind, diſorder, and debauch the Mind a thouſand ways; but 'tis only becauſe we give 'em too much ſcope; for a Man who is not intirely Maſter of himſelf, ſuffers them to paſs thoſe Bounds which Nature has preſcribed to them.

The Paſſions ought not to govern, and give Laws to Man ('tis that which makes 'em odious) but they ought to receive their Orders from Reaſon, and execute them, which often makes them neceſſary.

There is as much Action and Motion required for the Execution of an Enterpriſe, as Leiſure and Prudence for the Deliberation. The Heart and the Mind ſhare equally

ly in the Glory of our nobleſt Actions. The Mind begins and conceives them, by its Underſtanding; the Heart proſecutes and finiſhes them, by its Motion. The Mind has the Credit of the Deſign, and the Heart that of the Succeſs.

Succeſs, ſays *Seneca*, is not under the Juriſdiction of the Wiſe. We undertake and Fortune gives Succeſs. But Fortune loves Action and Motion; and this we plainly ſee in Young People, whom it favours more than others, by reaſon of their Briskneſs and Vivacity, and becauſe they have more Confidence than Wiſdom. 'Tis therefore in ſome meaſure neceſſary that the Heart, and Paſſions ſhou'd be concern'd; for we can do very little without them, how excellent ſoever our Genius is, and ſometimes all we do proceeds from them. Which perhaps made a great Politian ſay, that one had better be Impetuous than Circumſpect. But he tells us withal, that it is not always the ſureſt Way; for, ſays he, *Fortune* is inconſtant, and often abandons the Man whom ſhe ſeems moſt to favour, tho' never ſo bold and active. The Reaſon he gives for it is excellent; *Fortune* changes according to the Times, but the Man does not alter his Meaſures. We muſt therefore keep a juſt *Medium*, joyn the wiſe proceed-

ings of the Mind with the motions of the Soul, and follow his Opinion, who to succeed in his Undertakings, neither required Merit, nor extraordinary Fortune, but only a happy Dexterity.

X.

I applaud the Paſſions in thoſe they only agitate, but I blame them in thoſe they diſorder. And becauſe they may be more or leſs moderated, according to the Diſpoſitions of thoſe they animate, we need not fear to own, that certain cold and reſerved Men (I mean cold without being weak, reſerv'd without being heavy) may make a good Uſe of them, moderate their Violence, withſtand their Efforts, and ſo preſerve their Liberty and Judgment, which are the chief ingredients to qualifie a Man for the management of Affairs.

'Tis the Unhappineſs of Mankind, ſays a certain *Politician*, that it is hard to avoid one Inconvenience without falling into another. From whence he concludes, that Prudence requires we ſhould know the nature of Inconveniencies, and always chuſe the leaſt. But how can we know them, if the Mind is not enough at liberty to diſcover them?

I can

I cannot ſet off the excellency of this admirable Quality, I mean the Liberty of the Mind, any way ſo well as by remarking that all Kingdoms have their particular Laws, all Arts their Rules, and all Sciences their Principles, to which all that depend on them is brought together as to its Center. But Politicks is the only Science that has nothing conſtant in its Maxims, nothing uniform in its Rules, nor well grounded in its Principles. As it wholly depends on the difference of Times and Conjunctures, it contradicts it ſelf in its Principles, as often as the face of Affairs changes. So that its beſt Foundation is the Prudence and Ability of thoſe that cultivate it; who governing themſelves not ſo much by its Maxims, as by the change of Times, and preſent circumſtances of Things, make uſe of Rules ſuitable to Affairs, rather than manage Affairs according to Rule.

Experience authorizes this Conduct, and we often find that two Perſons have the ſame Succeſs with different Methods, and two others uſe the ſame Method for the very ſame Thing with a quite contary Succeſs. Of two that go the ſame Way, and ſteer the ſame Courſe, one ſhall come home ſafe, and the other not; which happens from

from the diversity of Times, and Conjunctures. Therefore a wise and discreet Man suits his Conduct to Times and Affairs; according to the Saying of *Tacitus*, *Morem accommodari, prout conducat.*

'Tis observable, that no Writings are more expos'd to Censure, than those of *Polititians*, because none so ill grounded. But the Man that will the most severely censure 'em, must expect to meet with other Criticks who will condemn his Censure, so arbitrary are their Decisions. And tho' with regard only to the Principles of Polititians, we should own more Solidity in them than others, yet if afterwards we descend from generals to particulars, the numerous Difficulties of the practical Part will but too well prove the Insufficiency of their Rules. Nothing bnt a solid extensive Judgment can conquer these Difficulties; As for Wit and Delicacy of Fancy, they signifie little or nothing.

What I say of *Politicks* in general, which concerns *Kingdoms* and *Republicks*, is to be apply'd to *Politicks* in particular, which concerns all Mankind; for every Man has one of his own making, as well as his Interest. If we do but observe it, we shall always find more than one way to compass our Ends, nor is there any general

Rule

Rule for chuſing which we ought to take. Reaſon alone, if we will conſult it, can put us into the beſt Method.

XI.

Should I attempt here to deſcend into the particulars of all Mens Actions, and more eſpecially the Proceedings of our *Wits*, to ſhew the Vanity of their Deſigns, and Irregularity of their Conduct in their Management of Affairs, I ſhould ſoon confound my ſelf with ſuch abundance of Matter as would carry me farther than I purpoſe to go. I ſhall therefore content my ſelf, before I make an end, to obſerve but one of thoſe Ways our *Men of Wit* for the moſt part take to raiſe themſelves in the World, which is to get themſelves as near as they can to great Men and Princes.

I know that all the World ſacrifices to Fortune, and that every one endeavours to make himſelf Happy. And as ſome place their Happineſs in one Thing, others in another, according to the different Turn their Imagination gives to the Ideas they have of the Objects of their Paſſion, ſo it happens that Men take as many different Ways, as they Imagine Means to make themſelves Happy. All Men do not take the ſame Methods, but every one takes what he thinks moſt

most proper for his Design, The most odd and Fantastical, in my Opinion, is that which Presumption suggests to some Men, I mean to make themselves known in the Courts of Princes, and boldly pass among the great Men for extraordinary Persons. As they vainly flatter themselves that their not being known, is the only Reason why they are not distinguish'd, they think of nothing but shewing themselves, and foolishly believe that this is all they have to do. The ordinary Ways by which every one ought to seek an Establishment most suitable for himself according to his Birth, and natural or acquir'd Qualities, for the Good of the Government he lives under, or his own proper Affairs, are absolutely unknown to our *Men of VVit*, who believing themselves to be extraordinary Men, think they must take extraordinary Methods; and are so vain upon their pretended Merit as to flatter themselves, that a *Prince* will break his usual Rules to raise and distinguish them from the Crowd.

There is scarce a *VVit* but thinks himself worthy of being a *Prince's Favourite*, and the principal Object of his Countenance. On this Foundation, his Pride makes him pretend to every Thing Honours, Favour, Recompences, all is due to him. A few gingling

gingling Verſes, an inſignificant Book, an Oration either written or pronounced, a pompous Epiſtle at the Head of a wretched Tranſlation, are ſo many Pieces which in his Opinion ought to ſpeak highly in his Favour, and give him a juſt Title to Rewards, which are due only to true Merit.

But in ſhort, if he is diſſatisfied with his Fortune, and his Hopes prove vain, he never fails of blaming the King and his Miniſters for all the Diſgrace and Trouble which his own ambitious Negligence, and Fooliſh Confidence have brought upon him. In that he ſupports very well his Character; for 'tis by the ſame Spirit of Preſumption only that he applauds himſelf in ſecret for his pretended Qualifications, and murmurs at his Diſgraces. Thus wanting both Strength and Liberty of Mind, infatuated and ſtubborn, and as uſeleſs to himſelf as he is to others, there is no Man more incapable of Buſineſs.

XII.

'Tis now time to put an end to this Work, which has inſenſibly increas'd under my Hand much more than I expected, tho' I have endeavour'd to ſay nothing but what was abſolutely neceſſary, to accompliſh my Deſign. I was willing to ſhow the World what

what an Opinion we ought to have of thoſe we call *VVits*, and thoſe we call *Stupid*; two Charactars which I have conſidered as two Extreams, equally diſtant from that juſt *Medium*, where I thought my ſelf oblig'd to place *Good and Solid Judgment*. I have not paſſed my Cenſure upon them without a due Examination; I have purſued them in all the Places they moſt affect to appear; but above all the *Man of VVit*, whom I have the moſt narrowly obſerved, becauſe the moſt artificial and the moſt to be feared. I have made it appear how Inſipid he is in his Converſation, how Vain and Superficial in his Writings, how Raſh and Imprudent in Affairs. I need ſay no more, to prove that the *Judgment* is only eſtimable; and that *VVit* is falſe and deceitful in every reſpect.

FINIS.